Greater Calcium Intake Correlated With Lower Body Mass Index

A recent issue of the journal *Nutrition* published the findings of Brazilian researchers of an association between greater calcium intake and lower body mass index in men and women.*

Researchers at the University of Sao Paulo evaluated data from 1,459 participants in the Health Survey of the State of Sao Paulo. Calcium intake was calculated from the responses to participant questionnaires.

A higher incidence of overweight and obesity was found among those whose calcium intake levels were in the lowest half of participants. For those whose intake was less than 398.5 mg per day, the risk of being overweight was 24% higher than the risk experienced by those whose intake was in the top 25% at 593.7 mg or more.

"Further clinical research on the effects of calcium on fat metabolism must be pursued with randomized clinical trials," the authors recommend.

—Dayna Dye


Chromium Plus Vitamins C & E Decrease Insulin Resistance in Diabetes

The nutrient chromium, alone or in combination with vitamins C and E, significantly lessens oxidative stress and reduces insulin resistance among patients with type 2 diabetes, according to the results of a new controlled study.*

Thirty subjects were blindly and randomly assigned to receive one of three regimens: chromium (1,000 mcg); chromium plus vitamin C (1,000 mg) and vitamin E (800 IU); or inactive placebo; each day for six months. At baseline, the subjects' blood chromium levels and antioxidant status were measured. No significant differences were detected among the groups.

But after half a year of supplementation, subjects taking chromium alone or chromium in combination with vitamin C and E experienced significantly improved antioxidant status and significantly reduced insulin resistance, fasting glucose, and hemoglobin A1c levels than subjects taking placebo.

"These findings suggest that chromium supplementation alone and [the combination] of chromium together with vitamins C and E was effective for minimization of oxidative stress and improvement of glucose metabolism in type 2 [diabetes] patients," concluded the study's author.

—Dale Kiefer


Vitamin C Lowers C-Reactive Protein

A recent article in the journal *Free Radical Biology and Medicine* reports the finding of researchers at the University of California, Berkeley that supplementing with vitamin C reduces C-reactive protein (CRP),* a marker of inflammation linked with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Gladys Block, PhD, and her associates randomized 396 non-smokers to receive vitamin C, vitamin E, or a placebo for two months. Although no effect for vitamin C was noted among those with desirable CRP levels, for participants with elevated CRP, vitamin C lowered CRP by 0.25 mg/L compared with placebo, a reduction similar to that associated with statin drug treatment.

"For people who have elevated CRP but not elevated LDL cholesterol, our data suggest that vitamin C should be investigated as an alternative to statins, or as something to be used to delay the time when statin use becomes necessary," Dr. Block concluded.

—Dayna Dye

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