Vitamin D, Calcium Reduce Premenopausal Breast Cancer Risk

Already considered essential for bone health, vitamin D and calcium may be crucial for breast cancer prevention, according to a report from the Archives of Internal Medicine.*

Noting that an apparent protective effect of vitamin D and calcium has previously been demonstrated in animal models, Harvard Medical School researchers sought to confirm the effect among human subjects. The investigators consulted a database of more than 30,000 pre- and post-menopausal women who are participants in a long-term study of women's health issues.

"Higher intakes of total calcium and vitamin D were moderately associated with a lower risk of premenopausal breast cancer," noted the researchers. The nutrients' anti-cancer effect appears to be especially robust against the most aggressive breast tumors.

—Dale Kiefer


Fish Oil Preserves Cognitive Function

According to two studies published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oil, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), may help preserve cognitive function in older adults.1,2

In one study, the diets of 210 healthy men ranging in age from 70 to 89 years with normal cognitive function were assessed and then reassessed five years later. Subjects who regularly ate fish demonstrated a slower decline in thinking ability than those who did not eat fish. A daily consumption of approximately 400 mg of EPA and DHA was recommended for maintaining healthy cognitive function.1

In the second study in 2,251 older adults, those with higher blood levels of EPA and DHA displayed less decline in verbal ability than those with lower levels. The effects were most pronounced in adults with high blood pressure and elevated lipid levels.2

—Robert Gaston
