**High Homocysteine Doubles Heart Disease Risk**

A high level of homocysteine in the blood is an "independent and important risk factor" for coronary artery disease in a high-risk population, roughly equal to the risk posed by elevated cholesterol and triglyceride levels, report Chinese researchers.*

Scientists studied 237 patients admitted for coronary angiography, an imaging procedure to identify blockages in the arteries supplying blood to the heart. Patients were divided into two groups: 138 who had been diagnosed with existing coronary disease, and 99 who were found to be normal. They were then assessed for a wide range of potential cardiovascular disease risk factors, including: blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglycerides, high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), and plasma homocysteine.

The study revealed that high homocysteine levels roughly doubled a patient's risk of coronary artery disease. Furthermore, statistical analysis showed hs-CRP, total cholesterol, and systolic blood pressure to be independent risk factors for coronary artery disease, while high-density lipoprotein (HDL) had a protective effect.

—Dale Kiefer


**Ground Flaxseed Reduces Hot Flashes**

Consuming flaxseed can help reduce uncomfortable hot flashes in postmenopausal women who are not using estrogen replacement therapy, according to a pilot study conducted at the Mayo Clinic.*

Twenty-nine women who suffered from hot flashes consumed 40 g (4 tablespoons) of crushed flaxseed per day for six weeks. The participants had not used any hormones, soy, or herbal supplements for the preceding four weeks.

In 21 women who completed the study, hot flash frequency was cut in half and the overall “hot flash score” diminished by an average of 57%. The women reported improved mood, reduced joint or muscle pain, fewer chills, and less sweating.

"Not only does flaxseed seem to alleviate hot flashes, but it appears to have overall health and psychological benefits as well," noted the lead author.

—Dayna Dye


**Vitamin E Supplementation Helps Prevent Venous Thromboembolism**

Supplementing with vitamin E may reduce the risk of venous thromboembolism among women, according to a recent report.* The condition occurs when a blood clot formed in the veins becomes dislodged and travels through the bloodstream, threatening life by blocking circulation to the brain, heart, or lungs.

Scientists reviewed data from a randomized trial of 39,876 women who received 600 IU vitamin E or placebo every other day for an average of 10 years. Women who received vitamin E experienced a 21% reduced risk of developing venous thromboembolism. For unprovoked venous thromboembolism (not caused by trauma, surgery, or cancer), vitamin E supplementation was associated with a 27% reduction in risk. Women with a history of venous thromboembolism or a genetic predisposition to the condition experienced even greater benefit, with a 44-49% reduction in risk in those taking vitamin E.

—Dayna Dye

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