In the NEWS

Low Magnesium and Fiber Intake Linked to Inflammation

Higher intake of magnesium and fiber is associated with lower levels of high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), according to a new report.* An important marker of inflammation, hs-CRP has been tied to elevated cardiovascular disease risk.

Using food-frequency questionnaires, researchers determined the fiber and magnesium intake of 1,653 study participants. Height, weight, blood pressure, and waist circumference were measured, and blood samples were analyzed for glucose, insulin, total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), triglycerides, and hs-CRP.

Subjects in the lowest third of magnesium and fiber intake were three to four times more likely to have diabetes, metabolic syndrome, or elevated hs-CRP (3 mg/L or higher). Low magnesium intake was independently correlated with elevated hs-CRP, but not with metabolic syndrome or diabetes, while low fiber intake was independently associated with a greater risk of diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and elevated hs-CRP.

—Dayna Dye


Eating Red Meat May Raise Breast Cancer Risk

Consuming red meat is strongly linked to the risk of developing hormone-receptor-positive breast cancer in premenopausal women, according to a new report by researchers at Harvard Medical School.1

After examining nutritional intake data for more than 90,000 premenopausal women aged 26-48, the scientists compared information on red meat intake with reported incidences of breast cancer, and monitored the women for 12 years.

Greater red meat intake was strongly linked to an elevated risk of both estrogen-receptor-positive and progesterone-receptor-positive breast cancers.2 However, red meat intake was not linked to either estrogen-receptor-negative or progesterone-receptor-negative breast tumors.2 Estrogen- and progesterone-positive breast cancer tumors are “fueled” by the presence of these female hormones and are considered distinct from hormone-negative tumors, differing in both incidence rates and risk factors.2

—Dale Kiefer


Lipoic Acid May Guard Against Alzheimer’s

The antioxidant *lipoic acid* may aid in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, particularly in their early stages, report Australian scientists.* Despite extensive study into the causes and progression of Alzheimer’s, a neuroprotective treatment—particularly for early-stage disease—is not yet available for clinical use.

The scientists noted that lipoic acid acts in several ways to improve brain health in Alzheimer’s sufferers. Alzheimer’s is associated with deficits of the brain neurotransmitter *acetylcholine* and its receptors. Lipoic acid activates an enzyme that facilitates increased acetylcholine production. Lipoic acid also reduces inflammation and acts as a powerful antioxidant, while increasing the availability of glucose for use by brain cells.

These observations suggest that lipoic acid may come to play an important role in averting mind-robbing dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

—Dale Kiefer
