**Osteoporosis Drug Reduces Breast Cancer Risk**

Therapy with raloxifene (Evista®), a drug used to both prevent and treat osteoporosis, reduced the risk of invasive breast cancer in postmenopausal women, according to researchers at the University of Michigan.10

The scientists analyzed data from a four-year trial involving 7,705 women and another four-year follow-up study involving 4,011 women. To assess breast cancer risk, pre-specified subgroups were defined by age, age at menopause, body mass index, family history of breast cancer, serum estradiol level, prior estrogen therapy, and bone mass at baseline in both the original trial and follow-up study. In the placebo group, older age, higher estradiol level, and a family history of breast cancer were associated with an increased breast cancer risk. Raloxifene therapy, however, led to reduced breast cancer incidence in women at both lower and higher breast cancer risk as determined by the pre-specified risk factors. Compared to placebo, raloxifene treatment was associated with reductions in risk ranging from 33% to 89%

The researchers concluded that raloxifene therapy was associated with a reduced risk of invasive breast cancer in postmenopausal women, irrespective of the presence or absence of other risk factors. The drug’s effect was especially pronounced in women with a family history of breast cancer.

—Matt Sizing

**Lutein, Zeaxanthin Improve Skin Health**

Compounds in leafy green vegetables known as lutein and zeaxanthin increase hydration, elasticity, and surface lipids of the skin while protecting against lipid oxidation, according to the results of a study presented at the Beyond Beauty Paris conference in September 2006.

Italian researchers studied women aged 25-50 who received 10 mg of an oral supplement of lutein and zeaxanthin, a 50-part-per-million topical lutein/zeaxanthin formula, a combination of oral and topical lutein and zeaxanthin, or a placebo for 12 weeks. Compared to placebo, lutein and zeaxanthin administered orally, topically, and both orally and topically were associated with improvements in skin elasticity, skin hydration, and superficial lipid levels, as well as a reduction in skin lipid oxidation. Combined oral and topical lutein provided the greatest overall benefit, resulting in a 60% increase in skin hydration, a 20% increase in skin elasticity, a 50% elevation in superficial lipid levels, and a 65% decrease in skin lipid peroxidation.

The study contributes to previous findings suggesting that regular ingestion of lutein may help improve the skin’s antioxidant defense system, which helps protect against damage caused by the sun and artificial light.31 Lutein and zeaxanthin are commonly ingested as nutritional supplements for eye health.

“This is the first study to determine the impact of lutein/zeaxanthin alone on the human skin,” noted Richard L. Roberts, PhD, senior manager of scientific affairs for Kemin Health, a leading manufacturer of lutein. “It provides strong new evidence of lutein’s positive role in promoting skin health and appearance by increasing hydration, elasticity, and lipid content.”

—Dayna Dye
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