**Olive Polyphenols May Ward Off Ulcers, Stomach Cancer**

Polyphenols derived from olive oil may help protect against peptic ulcers (of the esophagus, stomach, or upper small intestine) and gastric (stomach) cancers, according to a newly released report.*

Most peptic ulcers, and some gastric cancers, are caused by *Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori)* bacterium. Antibiotic treatment of *H. pylori* is lengthy and difficult, as antibiotic-resistant microorganisms are increasingly prevalent worldwide.

Polyphenols are powerful antioxidants thought to be responsible for many of the health-promoting effects of fruits and vegetables. Olive oil is also an abundant source of these phytochemicals. In the laboratory, scientists noted that polyphenols derived from olive oil were highly stable in an aqueous, acidic environment similar to that of the stomach. They also displayed potent bacteria-killing effects against eight different strains of *H. pylori*, including three antibiotic-resistant strains. The antibacterial effects of olive polyphenols were even stronger than those of polyphenols from tea, wine, and other plant extracts. Even very low concentrations of olive polyphenols effectively killed *H. pylori* bacteria.

—Elizabeth Wagner, ND

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**Vegetables, Nutrients Lower Risk of BPH**

Johns Hopkins researchers report that vegetables, beta-carotene, lutein, and vitamin C have a protective effect against benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a common condition in older men.* BPH is associated with lower urinary tract symptoms thought to be caused by enlargement of the prostate gland.

The study evaluated data from 51,529 participants who enrolled in the Health Professionals Follow Up Study in 1986. Dietary questionnaires at enrollment and every two years collected information on new diagnoses. The risk of BPH decreased with increased vegetable intake. Men whose vegetable intake was in the top fifth of participants had an 11% lower risk of BPH than those whose intake was in the lowest fifth. Fruits and vegetables rich in beta-carotene and lutein, and those high in vitamin C, were separately found to be protective.*

The study authors concluded, “Our findings are consistent with the hypothesis that a diet rich in vegetables and in beta-carotene, lutein, and vitamin C derived from foods may reduce the occurrence of BPH.”

—Dayna Dye

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**Natural Fiber May Reduce Overeating, Improve Lipids**

Canadian scientists have uncovered evidence that a natural fiber known as oligofructose may help reduce overeating and improve blood lipids.*

Available as a dietary supplement, this non-digestible food compound selectively stimulates the growth or activity of certain bacteria in the colon. In animal studies, oligofructose increased levels of the satiety hormone glucagon-like peptide (GLP-1) and of a gene in the intestines that helps the body to create more GLP-1. Lean and genetically obese rats that were fed diets enhanced with oligofructose and inulin (another fiber) for eight weeks greatly lowered their food intake and improved their blood lipid profiles. Scientists at the University of Calgary are now launching the first human trial of the fiber.

—Dayna Dye

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