B-Vitamin Deficit Impairs Athletic Performance

Athletes who are deficient in B vitamins may display diminished performance in high-intensity exercise compared to those with optimal nutrient intake, according to a recent report.*

Vitamins B1, B2, and B6 are used by energy-producing pathways, while vitamins B12 and folate assist new cell synthesis and repair of damaged cells. After examining the nutritional status, dietary intake, and performance of athletes, researchers noted that increased stress on the body's energy-producing pathways and tissues, combined with a loss of nutrients after strenuous activity and the need for extra nutrients to repair tissues, could increase B-vitamin requirements for athletes.

"Many athletes, especially young athletes involved in highly competitive sports, do not realize the impact their diets have on their performance," the researchers noted. Since the current US RDAs for B vitamins may be inadequate for active people, the researchers advise supplementing with a multivitamin/mineral formula.

---Dayna Dye


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Omega-3 Therapy Relieves Depression in Children

The omega-3 fatty acids EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) may help relieve clinical depression in children, according to a promising pilot study.* The US Department of Health and Human Services reports that one of every 33 children, and one of every eight adolescents, may suffer from depression.

Twenty children between the ages of 6 and 12 completed a small clinical trial in which they received either an omega-3 supplement or inactive placebo. Depression was scored using a combination of three different psychological rating scales.

While the placebo group demonstrated no improvement, seven of the ten children in the omega-3 group showed a 50% or greater reduction in depression scores, and four children achieved full remission. Omega-3 fatty acids may thus offer an effective means of managing depression in children.

---Robert Gaston


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Soy Consumption in Youth Reduces Breast Cancer Risk

Asian-American women who frequently consumed soy during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood reduced their risk of developing breast cancer, according to recent findings.* The strongest anti-cancer effect was associated with soy consumption between the ages of 5 and 11.

Scientists studied 597 American women of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino descent with breast cancer. Women whose soy intake during adolescence and adulthood was in the top third of all subjects had a 25% lower risk of developing breast cancer than those whose intake was in the lowest third. Women who consumed the most soy during childhood had a 58% lower risk.

"Hormonal exposures in adulthood, such as use of estrogen and progesterone replacement therapy, are established breast cancer risk factors," the scientists noted. "However, a growing body of evidence suggests that hormonally related exposures early in life may also modify susceptibility to breast cancer."

---Dayna Dye
