



Vitamin D May Lower Multiple Sclerosis Risk

Increasing vitamin D intake may reduce the risk of developing multiple sclerosis (MS), according to a recent Harvard study.*

In a study of 257 US military personnel with MS and 51 healthy control subjects, white adults in the highest quintile of serum vitamin D levels had a 62% lower risk of developing MS than those in the lowest quintile. Among white/non-Hispanics, the risk of MS dropped 41% for every 50-nmol/L increase of 25-hydroxyvitamin D in the blood. No association between serum levels of 25-hydroxyvitamin D and MS risk was noted for African-Americans or Hispanics, who had lower levels of this form of vitamin D in their blood compared to whites.

The researchers called for further investigation into vitamin D's protective role against multiple sclerosis.

—Dale Kiefer

* Munger KL, Levin LI, Hollis BW, Howard NS, Ascherio A. Serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels and risk of multiple sclerosis. *JAMA*. 2006 Dec 20;296(23):2832-8.

Creatine Improves Health, Extends Life Span in Mice

Creatine increases life span and enhances cognitive function in mice, according to a recent report from German scientists.¹

Used clinically to enhance endurance and improve muscle strength,^{2,3} creatine and its ability to increase energy utilization and reduce oxidative damage in the nervous system has recently drawn attention from scientists seeking cures for Huntington's disease, muscular dystrophy, and Alzheimer's disease.⁴⁻⁶

Due to its "marked neuroprotective effect" in rodent models of these and other diseases, as well as similar processes underlying aging and neurological disorders, the German researchers wondered whether creatine might also offer anti-aging benefits.¹ They found that mice fed creatine lived an average of 9% longer than control subjects, performed better in neurobehavioral tests, and exhibited less accumulation of lipofuscin, a lipid pigment associated with aging.^{1,7}

"[Creatine] may be a promising food supplement to promote healthy human aging," the scientists concluded.¹

—Dale Kiefer

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Low-Dose DHA Modestly Lowers Blood Pressure

British researchers have demonstrated that low doses of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), an omega-3 fatty acid found in algae and fish oil, modestly reduce blood pressure.* Previous studies have associated intake of omega-3 fatty acids with a decreased risk of death from heart attack.

In a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of 38 healthy men and women aged 40-65, the subjects received either 0.7 grams of DHA or placebo daily for three months. After a four-month washout period, the treatments were switched. When subjects took DHA, their diastolic blood pressure fell by 3.3 mm Hg and their heart rate dropped by 2.1 beats per minute.

"The results indicate that a moderate increase in the daily intake of DHA . . . lowers diastolic blood pressure," the researchers concluded.

—Dale Kiefer

* Theobald HE, Goodall AH, Sattar N, Talbot DC, Chowienzyk PJ, Sanders TA. Low-dose docosahexaenoic acid lowers diastolic blood pressure in middle-aged men and women. *J Nutr*. 2007 Apr;137(4):973-8.



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