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*A Nutrient to Know About*

**Turmeric**  
(see page 5)



May 2016

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# 4 WAYS TO A HEALTHY WEIGHT

PAGE 6



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# IN THIS ISSUE

**6** **4 New Ways to Fight the Battle of the Bulge**  
*Four effective strategies to support you on your journey to a healthy weight*

**The Nutrition Reporter™** **10**  
*Omega-3s help protect the brain against Alzheimer's disease and ALS*

**14** **Turmeric Takes Gold in Health!**  
*Discover how this inflammation-fighting spice can bring you a wealth of health*

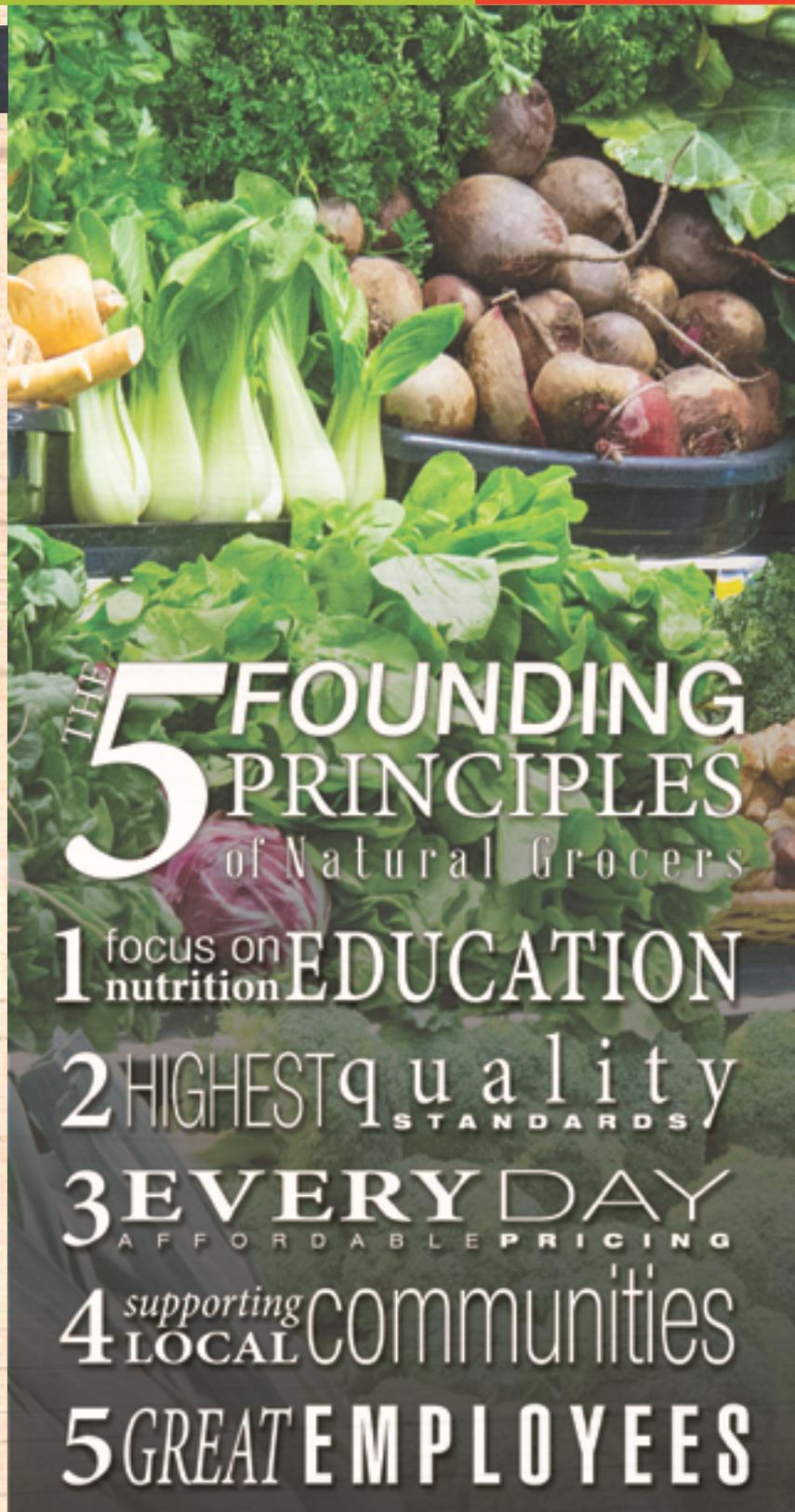
**Healthy & Delicious Recipes** **16**  
*Golden Milk*

## Greetings from Natural Grocers

Welcome to the May edition of the *Health Hotline!* Here at Natural Grocers we're gearing up for a month full of fresh produce, dinners eaten al fresco, celebrating the mothers in our lives, and Memorial Day, a day of remembrance and gratitude—and one that marks the “unofficial” start of summer. That’s right... summer! Are you ready? In this issue we discuss sunscreen safety and offer healthy alternatives to protect yourself and your family from UV damage *without* the chemicals. It’s also the time of year when many people start to fret about their weight, but we believe that a healthy weight is a beautiful weight. Forget about the yo-yo diets and discover four new ways you may not have considered to reach and maintain your own healthy weight on page 6. And don’t forget to read all about the golden spice of life turmeric—an incredible nutrient that we think you should know about!

And as always, you will find loads of amazing deals on the highest quality good for you produce, grocery products, dietary supplements, and body care around.

Happy reading!



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# SUNSCREEN SAFETY:

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU APPLY

By Lindsay Wilson

Whether your summer days are spent by the pool, in the mountains, on the lake, or at the beach, it's likely you are enjoying these places while slathered in sunscreen. It's second nature for most of us to apply sunscreen before long days spent in the sun, or even on a daily basis, to protect our skin from sunburn, premature aging, and skin cancer, but have you ever really stopped to look at what's in the stuff? Ingredients like oxybenzone, homosalate, and octinoxate are ubiquitous. These chemicals work by absorbing UV light, but they also penetrate the skin, enter the bloodstream (and in some cases, breastmilk),

and act as endocrine disruptors, interfering with normal hormone function. They can also create damaging free radicals in the skin—the very thing they are supposed to protect us from. There is a better choice. Mineral-based sunblock utilizes titanium dioxide and zinc oxide, two FDA-approved sunscreen ingredients that block both UVB and UVA rays, do not enter the bloodstream, do not have hormone-disrupting properties, and do not create free radicals. They work by reflecting UV rays away from the skin, preventing them from penetrating the skin in the first place.

## SUN PROTECTION FACTOR, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



*While an SPF of 100 sounds like a lot more than an SPF of 15, SPF 15 screens about 93% of UVB rays while an SPF 30 screens 97%. SPF 50 screens 98%.*

Sun protection factor (SPF) ratings only refer to UVB protection, not UVA, which penetrates deeper into the skin and contributes to photo-aging and cancer. In addition, the FDA has published draft regulations that would prohibit companies from labeling sunscreens with an SPF higher than 50, although these regulations have yet to be enacted. The agency wrote that higher values were "inherently misleading," and gave

consumers a false sense of security. More important than seeking out ultra-high SPF products is that you apply your sunscreen generously—the average adult requires approximately 2 tablespoons (about a shot glass worth) to adequately cover the body. Reapply every two hours or after sweating, swimming, or towel drying.

## CHEMICALS IN SUNSCREEN ARE KILLING THE WORLD'S CORAL REEFS

## PROTECTION FROM THE INSIDE OUT

In addition to using a physical sunblock, it is important to protect your body from UV-induced damage with an antioxidant-rich diet, including lots of fruits and vegetables, and supplementation with key antioxidants. It is important to note that it takes at least 8 to 10 weeks of supplementing to sufficiently protect your skin.

**Astaxanthin** seems to be particularly effective at protecting skin against UV-induced damage. A recent study found that astaxanthin "exhibited a pronounced photoprotective effect" on human skin cells exposed to moderate UVA radiation. The astaxanthin prevented cell death, reduced levels of damaging free radicals, and protected cell membranes. The cells were treated with astaxanthin 24 hours before exposure to the UVA radiation.

**Lutein** has also shown promise in protecting skin from photodamage. An animal study found that a diet rich in lutein (fed for two weeks before exposure) efficiently reduced UVB-induced cell proliferation and cell death. A human clinical trial showed that a daily dose of 10 mg of lutein (along with its partner zeaxanthin) increased skin hydration, elasticity, and skin lipid content, while reducing oxidation of those beneficial lipids by 55 percent.

**Lycopene** is known for promoting prostate health, but this carotenoid has also been shown to exert photoprotective properties, reducing inflammatory responses, maintaining normal cell proliferation, and possibly preventing DNA damage following UVB exposure.

The most commonly used chemical sunscreen, oxybenzone, isn't just bad for people—it is also contributing to the death of coral reefs around the world. Between 6,000 and 14,000 tons of sunscreen, containing up to 10 percent oxybenzone, are estimated to be released into coral reefs each year. While much of the run-off comes from beachgoers, a large amount also comes from wastewater (i.e., sunscreen washed down the shower drain) that eventually makes its way to the ocean. A study published earlier this year found several ways in which oxybenzone harms coral, including damaging DNA and increasing the rate of bleaching—the researchers also found that only a very small amount (62 parts per trillion) is needed to inflict damage. Coral reefs are more than eye candy for snorkelers—they are also important spawning grounds for many of the fish we eat and protect coastal areas from storms.



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### Nature's Way®

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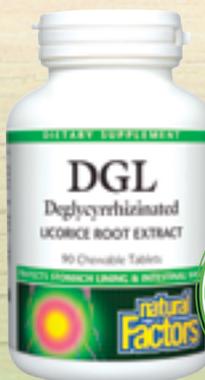
Turmeric & Bromelain 450 mg



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AdrenaSense



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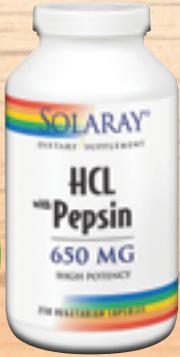


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## A Nutrient To Know About

### Turmeric

Excessive inflammation and oxidative stress caused by free radicals are underlying factors in poor health. Turmeric promotes a healthy inflammatory response and is a potent antioxidant, quenching free radicals throughout the body. A growing body of research is finding that it provides whole-body support, from brain health to cardiovascular health.\*

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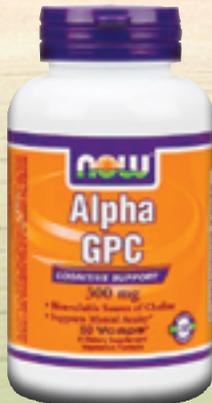
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Standardized

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300 mg



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Vitamin K-2  
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EDAP \$15.09

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# 4

## New Ways to Fight the Battle of the Bulge

By Jack Challem, American Society for Nutrition

With two of every three Americans overweight or obese—the latter more than 30 pounds over their ideal weight—it is no surprise that so many people are on perennial diets and that weight loss supplements are some of the most sought after. Unfortunately, this approach doesn't usually support long-term, or healthy, weight loss. Many diets do help people lose weight, but they must be adopted as part of a permanent lifestyle change, not as a diet to go "on" and eventually go "off." The on again, off again diet approach pretty much guarantees rebound weight gain. And when it comes to supplements, there is no miracle weight-loss solution; however, there are certain supplements that provide the whole-body support needed to achieve a healthy weight and can provide an edge when it comes to reducing weight.

Read on for four effective strategies to support you on your journey to a healthy weight.

### 1 Get Your Gut in Shape with Probiotics

As incredible as it might seem, our gut bacteria influences weight. Recent research has determined that the ratio of the two most dominant beneficial bacterial families in the human gut—*Bacteroidetes* and *Firmicutes*—have a strong bearing on weight.

People with a higher proportion of the *Bacteroidetes* family tend to maintain a normal weight, whereas people with large numbers of the *Firmicutes* family tend to be overweight. And when people lose weight, the ratio shifts in favor of *Bacteroidetes*. But many species of *Lactobacillus* promote weight loss, and *Lactobacillus* is a member of the *Firmicutes* family. With 1,000 of species of bacteria in the gut, individual species may exert more influence than families, so the real problem may be *dysbiosis*, a far broader imbalance in gut bacteria species in which beneficial bacteria are outnumbered by harmful ones. Consequently, the best approach may well be to take a multi-species probiotic to maintain a healthy balance in the gut.

Researchers at Laval University, Canada, asked 125 overweight men and women to follow a low-calorie weight-loss and maintenance diet for 24 weeks. In addition, half the subjects also took two capsules of a probiotic containing *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* and the other half took placebos each day. Women taking the probiotics lost an average of 11.5 pounds during the study, twice the amount of weight lost by women in the placebo group. There were no significant changes in the men.

Another study, at the University of Manitoba, Canada, tested *Lactobacillus*-containing probiotics on 28 overweight men and women. Everyone in the study ate the same diet, and the probiotics were consumed in yogurt. People consuming the *Lactobacillus*-rich yogurt lost an average of 3 to 4 percent of their body weight (equivalent to 10 pounds for a 250 pound person) during the 43-day study, while people eating regular yogurt lost only 1 percent of their body weight.

Another study, published in the December 2015 issue of *Beneficial Microbes*, tested the effects of a multi-species probiotic and prebiotics on 77 obese children. All of the children were placed on a weight-loss diet, but about half of them were also asked to take a daily supplement that included *L. acidophilus*, *L. rhamnosus*, *B. bifidum*, and *B. longum*. Children taking the probiotic/prebiotic supplement lost almost three times more weight during the 30-day study.

### 2 Add Fiber and Prebiotics

Soluble dietary fiber is rich in fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS) and galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS), two types of *prebiotics*, non-digestible carbohydrates that act as food for our microbes. These carbohydrates pass through the digestive tract intact, until they reach the large intestine where the microbes digest them and use them for energy. Consumption of prebiotics can bring balance to the gut, and has been shown to increase numbers of *Bacteroidetes* while reducing numbers of *Firmicutes*. People who eat very high-fiber diets have a more diverse—i.e., healthier—population of bacteria in their gut. Foods that are rich in prebiotics include



bananas, onions, leeks, garlic, and asparagus. Additionally, look for a probiotic supplement that also contains prebiotics.

Viscous soluble fibers like glucomannan, beta glucan, and psyllium support weight loss by creating a sense of fullness, blunting the desire to eat more. Soluble fiber also helps stabilize blood sugar, a key component in maintaining a healthy weight.

### 3 Improve Your Blood Sugar

Another strategy for maintaining or losing weight is stabilizing blood sugar levels. When blood sugar rollercoasters between highs and lows, appetite follows suit—low blood sugar triggers feelings of hunger and often leads to poor food choices; when a person eats something sweet or another type of refined carbohydrate, the quick rise in blood sugar will be followed by another hunger-stimulating low. Every rise in blood sugar also triggers the release of insulin, the fat storage hormone. Blood sugar that is not burned for energy or stored as glycogen for future energy use is turned into fat. With every rise in blood sugar, more insulin is released, eventually leading to insulin resistance, in which your body will produce even more insulin, and store even more fat.



Several nutrients can help maintain normal blood sugar and insulin levels. Chromium is an essential nutrient needed for normal insulin function and blood-sugar control. A study of 180 people with type-2 diabetes

found that 1,000 mcg of chromium picolinate daily resulted in significant improvements in blood sugar and insulin levels after just four months. Niacin-bound chromium has similar benefits. In another study, researchers asked 28 overweight women to take 200 mcg of niacin-bound chromium three times daily, along with moderate dieting and exercise, for two months. The women taking chromium lost significant amounts of fat, but preserved their fat- and sugar-burning muscle tissue.

Silymarin, an extract of the herb milk thistle, can also lower and stabilize blood sugar. Studies of people with type-2 diabetes have found that taking 200 mg three times daily can reduce blood sugar, insulin, and HbA1c, a measurement of blood sugar levels over a period of time.

### 4 Opt for Good Fats

Trans fats, which are still found in some processed foods and fast foods (in the form of partially hydrogenated or hydrogenated vegetable oil), fundamentally alter how the body metabolizes other fats, particularly the omega-3s and omega-6s. So does a diet with excessive amounts of linoleic acid, found in vegetable and grain oils. These disruptions of fat metabolism can last for years and increase the risk inflammation, diabetes, and weight gain.

But several studies suggest that “loading” omega-3s and omega-6s can correct the imbalance and help with weight loss. How? Apparently by replacing stored trans fats with healthy fats in cells. A study of 44 men and women at Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania, found that taking 1,600 mg/d eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and 800 mg/d docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) for four weeks led to increases in lean muscle mass and decreases in fat. Other



studies have found similar benefits. GLA supplements can help people keep excess weight off, according to a study at the University of California, Davis. The study focused on 50 people who had recently lost weight. Some of the subjects were asked to take 890 mg of gamma-linolenic acid (GLA, an omega-6 fat that has properties similar to omega-3s) or placebos daily. After one year, people taking the relatively large amount of GLA were less likely to regain weight.

### Finally...

Losing those unwanted pounds and maintaining a healthy weight is not easy work and demands a comprehensive, whole body approach. First, ditch the yo-yo dieting and make a healthy, nutrient-dense diet a lifestyle priority. Second, forget about finding a magic weight loss pill and instead focus on supporting a healthy balance of bacteria in the gut, increasing fiber and prebiotic intake, balancing blood sugar, and increasing levels of healthy fats. A healthy weight will follow. 🍏

## The Obesity-Inflammation Connection

If you are overweight and carrying a lot of fat around your belly, you are also a walking inflammation bomb. The combination—which you should consider a wake-up call—creates a higher than average risk of developing type-2 diabetes, heart disease, venous thrombosis, gastrointestinal diseases, psoriasis, liver diseases, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, cancer, depression, and many other inflammatory diseases.

To explain, your fat cells aren't just sitting around getting fatter. They're busy secreting gobs of inflammation-promoting substances called cytokines that increase the risk of those diseases. Making a bad situation worse, a family of white blood cells called macrophages embed themselves between fat cells, particularly those that form in the belly. Macrophages are meant to kill disease-causing bacteria by attacking them with free radicals and a variety of cytokines, and they respond to an excess of fat cells by overproducing inflammation-stimulating cytokines and free radicals.

Body fat might be the cauldron for stirring up macrophages and cytokines—the cytokines circulate throughout the body and concentrate in places where inflammation is already present—such as knee joints and the heart—where they rev up inflammation. Some cytokines also promote insulin resistance, a sign of prediabetes and forerunner of type-2 diabetes.

The take away? Losing excess weight and reducing inflammation go hand-in-hand.

# TURMERIC

A NUTRIENT TO KNOW ABOUT

DO THE STRESSES OF MODERN LIFE MAKE YOUR BRAIN FEEL LIKE IT'S INFLAMED?



SEE PAGE 14

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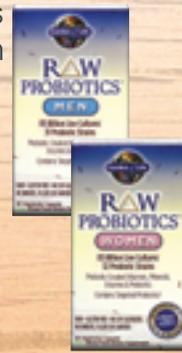


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The independent newsletter that reports vitamin, mineral, and food therapies.



## LOW VITAMIN D LEVELS RAISE RISK OF DEATH FROM MULTIPLE CAUSES

If you want to increase your risk of death in any given year, having a vitamin D deficiency will certainly boost your chances. Conversely, maintaining normal levels of the vitamin will lower your risk of death.

Ben Schöttker, PhD, of the German Cancer Research Center, Heidelberg, along with a multi-nation team of collaborators, analyzed data from eight published studies of vitamin D and mortality. Those studies, which were conducted in the United States and Europe, included a total of 16,018 men and women ages 50-79 years. In those studies, a total of 2,624 people died from cardiovascular diseases, and 2,227 died from cancer.

They found that vitamin D levels varied by season, country, and sex—men had higher blood levels of the vitamin compared with women.

Overall, people with the lowest levels of vitamin D were 57 percent more likely to die from any cause, including cardiovascular disease over four to 16 years of follow up. People with a history of cancer were 70 percent more likely to die if they had low levels of the vitamin, compared with people who had relatively high levels.

Reference: Schöttker B, Jorde R, Peasey A, et al. Vitamin D and mortality: meta-analysis of individual participant data from a large consortium of cohort studies from Europe and the United States. *BMJ*, 2014. doi:10.1136/bmj.g3656.

# OMEGA-3s PROTECT THE BRAIN, REDUCE RISK OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND ALS

The omega-3s are essential for prenatal, infant, and childhood brain development—and for maintaining healthy moods throughout life. Two new studies show that the omega-3s also help protect the brain against Alzheimer's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig disease.

In the first study, Lori A. Daiello, PharmD, of the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University, Rhode Island, and her colleagues studied three groups of people: 229 who were cognitively normal, 397 with mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and 193 with Alzheimer's disease. Of these subjects, 117 were regularly taking fish oil supplements when the study began and throughout the five-year study.

All of the subjects underwent brain magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and took two cognitive tests every six months.

The fish oil supplements were associated with benefits in the healthy subjects and those with MCI, except for people who had the APOE e4 gene, which increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease. The fish oils had no apparent benefit in patients with



established Alzheimer's disease.

The specific benefits associated with fish oils included less atrophy of the cerebral cortex gray matter and hippocampus, as well as better scores on the Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale and the Mini-Mental State Examination.

In the other study, Kathryn C. Fitzgerald, MSc, of the Harvard University School of Public Health, and her colleagues analyzed data from 1,002,082 men and women who had been participants in five different studies. Of these, 995 people developed ALS during the studies.

People with the highest consumption of omega-3 fish oils had a 34 percent lower risk of developing ALS, compared with those who consumed the fewest fish oils.

Fitzgerald and her colleagues noted that other studies have found that the omega-3s have "neuro-protective

effects."

References: Daiello LA, Gongvatana A, Dunsiger S, et al. Association of fish oil supplement use with preservation of brain volume and cognitive function. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 2014. doi:10.1016/j.jalz.2014.02.005. Fitzgerald KC, O'Reilly EJ, Falcone GJ, et al. Dietary omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid intake and risk for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. *JAMA Neurology*, 2014. doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2014.1214.

## CURCUMIN EASES INFLAMMATION AND PAIN AFTER EXERCISING

Curcumin, an extract from turmeric root, is well established for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. A new study by Spanish researchers has found that curcumin supplements can also benefit people who regularly exercise.

Franchek Drobnic, MD, PhD, of the Olympic Training Center in Barcelona, Spain, and his colleagues studied 20 healthy young men who routinely exercised for at least four hours each week. The men were given a proprietary curcumin formula that used lecithin as a fat-soluble medium to enhance absorption.

Some of the subjects took the supplements, containing 200 mg of curcumin, twice daily for four days—two

days before a strenuous exercise test, the day of the test, and one day after it. Others took placebos.



Men taking curcumin supplements reported less pain in the lower limbs, with the most significant reductions in the right and left anterior thighs, when Drobnic compared them to those who took placebos. In addition, men taking curcumin had less muscle damage, based on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and levels of pro-inflammatory interleukin-8.

Drobnic F, Riera J, Appendino G, et al. Reduction of delayed onset muscle soreness by a novel curcumin delivery system (Meriva®): a randomised, placebo-controlled trial. *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*, 2014. doi:10.1186/1550-2783-11-31.

## ORAL AND INTRAVENOUS VITAMIN C SHOW ANTI-VIRAL BENEFITS

The role of vitamin C in combating infections has been controversial, but the vitamin does seem to help according to two recent studies.

Carol S. Johnston, PhD, of Arizona State University, Phoenix, and her colleagues gave either 1,000 mg of vitamin C or placebos daily to 28 young nonsmoking men who had marginal-to-low blood levels of the vitamin. Tests measured their physical activity and upper respiratory symptoms during the eight-week study.

Johnston reported several findings. By the last two weeks of the study, men taking vitamin C had a modest increase in physical activity. Vitamin C plays a role in how cells produce energy.

The men were also 45 percent less likely to contract a cold. Only seven of the 15 men taking vitamin C had colds, compared with 11 of the 13 taking placebos.

Furthermore, the length of colds was reduced by an average of 59 percent in men taking vitamin C, compared with the placebo group. In a second study, Nina A. Mikirova, PhD, and Ronald Hunninghake, MD, of the Riordan Clinic, Wichita, Kansas, analyzed

the effect of intravenous vitamin C (IVC) on 218 patients who had been infected with the Epstein-Barr virus. The virus causes mononucleosis and can trigger Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS).

Dr. Hunninghake is a medical advisor to The Nutrition Reporter™ newsletter.

Most of the subjects had a diagnosis of CFS, while the remainder had mononucleosis, fatigue, or Epstein-Barr infection. Laboratory tests found that they had elevated levels of Epstein-Barr virus antibodies (which fight the infection).

The patients received IVC treatments with doses ranging from 7.5 to 50-grams, and the majority of patients had multiple IVC infusions. Antibody levels decreased significantly among patients receiving IVC, compared with patients who did not receive the treatment. In addition, the levels of antibodies were inversely correlated with blood vitamin C levels.

Reference: Johnston CS, Barkjumb GM, Schumacher SS. Vitamin C supplementation slightly improves physical activity levels and reduces cold incidence in men with marginal vitamin C status: a randomized controlled trial. *Nutrients*, 2014;6: 2572-2583. Mikirova NA, Hunninghake R. Effect of high dose vitamin C on Epstein-Barr viral infection. *Medical Science Monitor*, 2014;20:725732.

## YES, FRUIT AND VEGETABLES REALLY DO LOWER THE RISK OF DEATH



An analysis of 16 published studies, including 833,234 people, has confirmed that eating fruits and vegetables does in fact lower the risk of death.

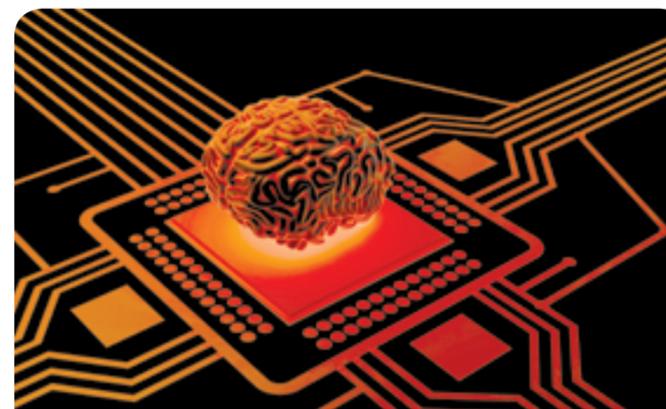
Frank B. Hu, MD, PhD, of the Harvard University School of Public Health, and his colleagues analyzed data from the studies, in which 56,423 people died during follow-up periods ranging from 4.6 to 26 years.

Each daily serving of fruits and vegetables reduced the risk of death from all causes and specifically cardiovascular diseases by about 5 percent. In other words, eating five servings of fruits and vegetables daily reduced the risk of death by about 25 percent.

"There was a threshold around five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, after which the risk of all cause mortality did not reduce any further," Hu wrote.

Reference: Wang X, Ouyang Y, Liu J, et al. Fruit and vegetable consumption and mortality from all causes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer: systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. *BMJ*, 2014;349:g4490.

## RESVERATROL SUPPLEMENTS BOOST MEMORY, BRAIN CONNECTIONS



Resveratrol, an antioxidant found in red wine and Japanese knotweed, has been shown to activate an age-slowing gene, Sirt1. A new study has found that it has the potential to improve cognition—in effect, helping to rejuvenate the brain.

A. Veronica Witte, PhD, of the Charité University Medicine in Berlin, Germany, and her colleagues gave either 200 mg of resveratrol or placebos to 46 overweight men and women who ranged from 50 to 75 years of age.

The resveratrol supplements, but not the placebos, led to several improvements in the brain after 26 weeks. Chief among them were significant improvements in remembering words 30 minutes after a test.

Neuroimaging determined that the supplement had increased the number of connections between the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex of the brain.

What's more, long-term blood sugar levels, as measured by HbA1c, decreased slightly. And the improvements in memory and new brain connections correlated with the lower blood sugar levels.

Reference: Witte AV, Kerti L, Margulies DS, et al. Effects of resveratrol on memory performance, hippocampal functional connectivity, and glucose metabolism in healthy older adults. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 2014;34:7862-7870.

### Quick Reviews of Recent Research

#### Pistachio nuts good for blood vessels

Just about everyone likes to eat pistachio nuts. It turns out that they have numerous blood-vessel benefits, according to a study conducted at Pennsylvania State University. Researchers asked 30 people, ages 40 to 74 years with type-2 diabetes, to eat either a moderately low-fat diet or a higher fat diet that contained pistachio nuts. The subjects ate approximately 150 pistachio nuts daily. People eating the nuts benefited from less blood-vessel constriction when they were subjected to stress. They also had lower systolic blood pressure—minus 3.5 mm Hg during the day and minus 5.7 mm Hg while sleeping. They also had improved heart rate variability—subtle variations in the time between heart beats.

Sauder KA. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 2014;3:e000873.

#### Fiber intake linked to lower heart attack risk

Researchers at the Harvard University School of Public Health analyzed data from 2,258 women and 1,840 men who had completed at least one dietary questionnaire before and after surviving a heart attack. People who consumed the largest amounts of dietary fiber before and after a heart attack were 31 percent less likely to die from any cause. Higher fiber intake only after a heart attack was associated with a 25 percent lower risk of death from any cause. The strongest associations were with cereal fiber.

Li S. *BMJ*, 2014;348:g2659.

#### Fewer carbs may reduce breast cancer risk

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, studied 265 postmenopausal breast cancer survivors and compared them with 174 healthy subjects. Half of the tumors were positive for the insulin growth factor-1 (IGF-1) receptor, which is stimulated by carbohydrate intake. IGF-1 and carbohydrate intake separately increased the risk of breast cancer recurrence, and the combination increased the risk of recurrence by more than five times.

Emond JA. *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, 2014;23:1273-1279.

#### Fish really does seem to be brain food

Eating baked or broiled, but not fried, fish at least once a week is associated with larger brain sizes in regions involved in memory and cognition. The 10-year study, conducted at the University of Pittsburgh, was based on dietary intake and brain scans.

Raji CA. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2014; doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2014.05.037.

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# TURMERIC TAKES GOLD IN HEALTH!

*Discover how this inflammation-fighting spice can bring you a wealth of health*

*By Heather Pratt, MNT and Lindsay Wilson*

**W**e live in an inflammatory world, and I'm not talking about the political climate. I'm talking about *real* inflammation— inflammation driven by processed foods, sugar, refined carbohydrates, pollution, chronic stress, excessive alcohol consumption, and chemicals used to grow our food. Together these factors prompt our bodies to release a steady stream of inflammatory molecules, resulting in a significant number of people being chronically inflamed... and chronically diseased. Chronic inflammation is a root cause of nearly every modern-day disease, from Alzheimer's and heart disease to arthritis and diabetes. Excessive inflammation has even been linked to premature aging. The one-two punch comes when all of those inflammatory molecules floating around our bodies produce free radicals that damage cells and tissues (oxidative stress), promoting even more disease and aging.

We are experiencing a national health crisis fueled by chronic inflammation—even children and teenagers are experiencing an increase in inflammatory diseases like type-2 diabetes, obesity, asthma, and inflammatory bowel disease. So the question remains, what can we do to douse the flames? Of course

improving your diet, managing stress, and reducing chemical exposure are vital components, and then there's **turmeric**, a serious ally in the fight against inflammation and oxidative stress. Researchers have discovered nearly 100 different ways in which turmeric counters inflammation— no other substance has been found to have such far-reaching anti-inflammatory effects. Read on to discover why turmeric takes gold in health!

*Curcuminoids are the bioactive compounds in turmeric that are responsible for most of its health benefits. Curcumin is the most abundant and best researched curcuminoid, which is why you often hear turmeric referred to as "curcumin."*

## **Inflammation on the Brain? Turmeric's the Trick!**

An inflamed brain is a sick brain that may manifest in a myriad of ways, from anxiety and depression to the development of neurological diseases like Alzheimer's— excessive inflammation and oxidative damage are common underlying factors. A growing body of research indicates that turmeric has neuroprotective properties, likely due to its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects, and its ability to

cross the blood-brain barrier, allowing it to have a direct effect on brain cells. Researchers have found that supplementation with *curcumin*—one of the most abundant and researched bioactive compounds in turmeric—can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, can improve memory, protects the brain from damage caused by heavy metals like lead, and may modulate the damage

caused by a stroke.

Turmeric also shows promise in the fight against one of our most dreaded diseases, Alzheimer's. An epidemiological study found that elderly men and women who consumed turmeric (in the form of curry) "occasionally," "often," or "very often" had significantly better scores on a standardized test of mental status compared to subjects who "never or rarely" consumed turmeric. Perhaps it's no coincidence that India, which has a population that consumes large amounts of turmeric, has one of the lowest rates of Alzheimer's disease in the world. Scientists are coming to understand that turmeric protects the brain from the disease in a number of ways. Animal models of Alzheimer's show that turmeric protects the brain from oxidative stress and inflammation, leading factors in the development of the disease, and can prevent the formation of amyloid plaque. Amyloid plaque is a hallmark of the disease and consists of protein fragments that collect in the brain, increasing both inflammation and oxidative stress. Curcumin is also able to bind to existing plaque, increasing the body's ability to break it up, while also increasing the activity of macrophages, immune cells that move around the body gobbling up foreign material like amyloid plaque.

Turmeric's neuroprotective effects are an exciting area of research, but this golden spice's health benefits don't stop there.

### Cool Your Flaming Heart

Inflammation is a major factor in the development of coronary heart disease—the progressive narrowing of the arteries that leads to reduced blood flow to the heart—so it is no wonder that turmeric is especially beneficial to cardiovascular health. In addition to keeping inflammation under control, it protects cholesterol from oxidation, the point at which cholesterol becomes dangerous, and helps to inhibit plaque buildup in the arteries (atherosclerosis). Turmeric also supports healthy endothelial function, in part by increasing nitric oxide levels, inhibits platelet aggregation, reduces triglyceride levels, reduces LDL cholesterol while increasing HDL cholesterol, and enhances the antioxidant defenses of cardiovascular cells.

### Take Arthritis and Other Aches & Pains Down a Notch

It's all too easy to reach for an over-the-counter pain reliever to dull arthritic or other chronic pain, but these can come with adverse side effects. Turmeric blocks or reduces the production of many of the same inflammatory molecules as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), so it should come as no surprise that an extract of curcumin, combined with lecithin for increased absorption, was found to have analgesic properties equal to those of acetaminophen. Curcumin extract has also been found to improve symptoms of rheumatoid and osteoarthritis—as effectively as commonly prescribed medications. In addition to reducing inflammation, the curcuminoids appear to have a protective effect on cartilage cells, which can lead to improvements in pain and physical function.

### Turn Down the Heat on Diabetes & Obesity

A metabolic disorder is one in which normal metabolic functions in the body are altered or disrupted, leading to poor health—type-2 diabetes and obesity are two you may be most familiar with. Both have an underlying component of inflammation. Diabetics and obese people produce more inflammatory compounds, putting them at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease. Curcumin reduces inflammatory compounds and improves markers of oxidative stress, while also increasing insulin sensitivity. It has also been found to improve vascular function in type-2 diabetics, comparable to the effects of a common statin drug. One small study found that pre-diabetics who took 250mg of curcumin extract every day for nine months were far less likely to progress to full-blown diabetes than those who took the placebo. And when it comes to obesity, all of those extra fat cells are constantly secreting inflammatory substances and causing more oxidative stress, creating a state of chronic inflammation, and increasing the risk of other disease. Curcumin has been shown to down regulate several inflammatory molecules secreted by fat cells and inhibit a protein closely linked to obesity. It also appears to activate a protein that inhibits the growth of fat cells.

The Sanskrit word for turmeric is *jayanti*, which translates to "one who wins over disease." In our modern world of chronic inflammation and all the diseases that come with it, it's no wonder turmeric has made such a splash. Whether you take it for brain health or cardiovascular health, or anything in between, you'll be reaping a wealth of health for your whole body from this golden spice of life. 🌿

### Get the Most Out of Your Turmeric

As great as turmeric is, there is one catch—even though it is well tolerated, curcumin is poorly absorbed and rapidly metabolized and eliminated from the system. To improve absorption of turmeric we can take a cue from Indians—consume it with fat. Turmeric is fat-soluble, which means that consuming it with fat utilizes absorption. This might be by quickly sautéing the spice in ghee before it goes into a dish or by adding it to milk or yogurt. Modern supplement manufacturers have also tackled the problem of absorption and have come up with some pretty clever solutions, such as delivering it with piperine from black pepper and formulating it with fatty acids. Micronizing, or reducing the size of the curcumin particles, is another method that appears to be especially effective at enhancing absorption, and many producers are utilizing micronized curcumin in their products. Taking your turmeric supplement with omega-3 fish oil or phosphatidylcholine may also improve absorption.

References available upon request.



# COOKING WITH THE *GOLDEN SPICE* *OF LIFE*

Turmeric, that gloriously golden spice that is so ubiquitous in Indian cuisine and gives curry its golden color, has finally made its way into the Western kitchen, and it's causing quite a stir. A true superfood, turmeric is a rhizome that looks similar to ginger, but flaunts a deep orange-gold color. That deep color is what holds the secret to turmeric's powerful health-promoting properties, phytonutrients called curcuminoids. The curcuminoids (curcumin is the most abundant and well-studied) have been the focus of numerous studies and are proving to be incredibly valuable to human health, mostly due to their powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. For detailed information on how turmeric can benefit your health, check out *Turmeric Takes Gold in Health!* on page 14.

Turmeric is mildly aromatic with a slight earthy flavor of ginger and pepper, and even a little citrus. Used in excess or eaten raw, you will notice a bitter quality, but otherwise it is a somewhat mild spice. In fact you can add small amounts of it to lots of dishes and no one would ever be the wiser. It's easy to regularly incorporate a little turmeric in your diet: Try adding a little to your morning smoothie, scrambled eggs, sautéed veggies for a soup base or stew, roasted potatoes, egg or chicken salad, steamed rice, and of course curried dishes. And be sure to try one of the tastiest ways to drink turmeric—golden milk! The recipe is easy, delicious, and oh so good for you!



Golden Milk whisked with turmeric paste, coconut oil and honey for sweetness.

## TURMERIC PASTE

Makes 1/2 cup

This turmeric paste is quick and easy to make and will keep in the refrigerator for two weeks, making whipping up a cup of golden milk a breeze! The addition of black pepper improves the body's absorption of turmeric.

- 1/2 cup purified water
- 1/4 cup NG bulk turmeric powder
- 1/2 teaspoon NG bulk ground black pepper

Whisk together the water, turmeric powder, and pepper in a small pan over medium-low heat. Continue to whisk as the mixture thickens into a paste. Cooking for several minutes helps soften the turmeric's bitterness. If the paste becomes too thick, just add a small amount of water to loosen it up. Once it has cooked for several minutes, remove from heat and let cool. Once cool, transfer to a small glass jar with an airtight lid. Store in the refrigerator up to two weeks.

## GOLDEN MILK

Makes 1 serving

- 1 cup milk (use your choice of cow's milk, coconut milk, almond milk, etc.)
- 1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon turmeric paste
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil
- NG honey, to taste

Place the milk in a small saucepan and whisk in turmeric paste. Warm over medium heat, whisking frequently, until the mixture begins to simmer and steam—do not allow it to boil, as prolonged heat may destroy the active ingredients in turmeric. Turn off the heat and whisk in the coconut oil (the coconut oil helps improve absorption) and honey, to taste. Pour into a large mug and savor the liquid gold!



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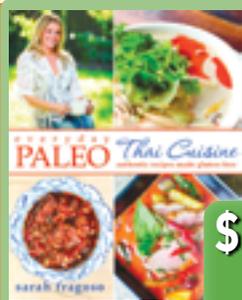
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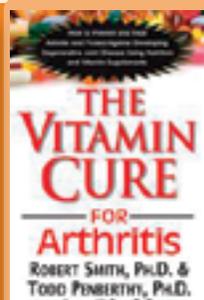
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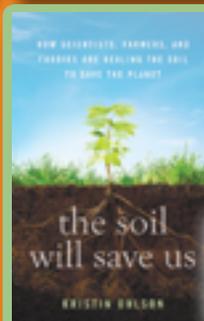
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