

Nutrition

Commentary by Hans J. Kugler, OPh.D.

***** Vitamin C reduces CRP.**

C-reactive protein (CRP), a strong predictor of cardiovascular disease, is reduced by a daily supplement of 500+ mg of vitamin C. These are the findings by UC Berkeley researchers, prof. Gladys Block lead investigator. The study, performed on 156 people, showed an approximate 25% drop in CRP after taking a daily supplement of 500+ mg of vitamin C for two months.

**** Yogurt Bacteria reduce Arthritis Inflammation in animal study.**

Probiotics, like bacteria in yogurt and other strains, have previously been shown to bolster immune functions; these bacteria, introduced into parts of the body, like nose or vagina, help to shift the balance of good/bad bacteria and prevent bad bacteria from taking hold. Now researchers found that bacteria in yogurt are effective against inflammatory joint disorders. Science News, 8.14.2004, p. 100.

*** B-Vitamin's Wonder-drug potential; add strong bones to its Benefits.**

Now two research groups (Joyce van Meurs, Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam, Denmark and Robert McLean, Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for the Aged, Boston,) demonstrated that high levels of homocysteine can quadruple the risk of fractures due to osteoporosis, and that taking B-vitamins (with an emphasis on folic acid) can eliminate that risk. Ref.: NEJM, 5.12.04.

Commentary: Most people who keep up with the research in nutrition already take B-vitamins - - specifically folic acid - - because it has been shown to reduce homocysteine levels, a clear indicator of heart disease and Alzheimer's. For a more detailed summary of these two publications see Science News, May 15, 2004, p. 307.

***** Beware of Excess Zinc.**

The RDA for zinc is 11 mg/day for men and 8 mg/day for women. However, a large percentage of men are taking quite a bit more.

Data from the Health Professionals Follow-up Study (HPFS), initiated in 1986, now show that men who consumed more than 100 mg of zinc/day had twice the risk of advanced prostate cancer. Ref.: Leitzman, M et al: JNCI 2003;95(13): 1004-7.

Commentary: Over the past years I have alerted people to checking their Zinc intake; add up the zinc in all of your supplements. While some nutrition experts believe that the RDA for zinc is too low, and some Zinc supplementation studies suggest slightly higher RDAs, earlier data also suggested that an excess of 50 mg/day of zinc can cause a copper deficiency. This is probably due to the fact that the very important enzyme Superoxide Dismutase (SOD, football-shaped, with zinc and copper in the focal points) needs both, zinc and copper, to be formed.