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How Antioxidants Help With Inflammation

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Introduction

You have probably heard about antioxidants but did you know they are an important way to fight inflammation that you don't want? Inflammation can be a risk factor for numerous diseases and health problems. Antioxidants can reduce inflammation and help your body protect itself from the damage caused by toxins and disease.

Inflammation – the Good and the Bad

Is all inflammation bad for you? No, some inflammation is necessary to heal your body. When you damage muscles, tendons or ligaments, you often see inflammation and reduced function in the affected areas. The inflammatory response allows tissue repair and limits further damage by restricting movement in the injured area.

Inflammation that becomes excessive or chronic can prevent healing and makes your body more susceptible to disease. Besides joint related diseases like arthritis, inflammation can be a key contributor to heart disease, stroke, cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, Alzheimer's disease and chronic fatigue syndrome. Excessive or chronic inflammation occurs when your body continues to react to what are called free radicals in your system. A free radical is when a molecule looses an electron and becomes damaged or unstable.

It is not possible to completely stop your body from producing free radicals because it is part of natural metabolic processes. In fact, every time you breathe, you create free radicals. However, your chiropractor wants you to know the steps you can take to limit the production of free radicals and help your body deal with free radicals and thus reduce the risk of chronic inflammation.

Help your body by watching your stress levels and diet. Consume plenty of organic fruits and vegetables, especially raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, kale and spinach. For protein rich sources, opt for fish over meat. Legumes and nuts are also good sources of protein. Exercise to keep your body in an appropriate weight range. Learn stress

QUESTION:

How do antioxidants reduce inflammation?

A) Increase lung capacity
B) Block free radicals
C) Thicken the blood

Answer:

B) Block free radicals

TRUE OR FALSE:

All inflammation is bad for your health

False

Some inflammation is required to heal injuries and wounds

QUESTION:

Which inflammatory substance did thyme reduce by 75%

A) COX-2
B) Interleukin 8
C) Hydrogen peroxide

Answer:

A) COX-2

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management techniques to help you stay relaxed. Ask your chiropractor for tips on improving your diet and lifestyle.

Tea and Herbs: Heal Inflammation and Reduce Signs of Age

Recent research shows that common herbs and tea may provide excellent protection against inflammation. A British study investigated the healing effects of 21 different plant extracts. The researchers were focused primarily on how inflammation affects skin cells, as inflammatory conditions cause wrinkled skin and premature aging.

The substances that exhibited the most anti-inflammatory action were white tea, witch hazel and rose – all contain antioxidant compounds. The study reported that these three botanical substances play a role in blocking the body from producing the compound interleukin 8, a proinflammatory substance.[1]

A study on botanical substances and inflammation published in the Journal of Lipid Research revealed thyme oil had a powerful effect at suppressing the inflammatory substance known as COX-2. The research studied six plant extracts- thyme, clove, rose, eucalyptus, fennel and bergamot. While all six showed anti-inflammatory action, thyme performed the best by reducing COX-2 presence in cells by 75% - compared to 25% for the other plant extracts. This is likely the result of antioxidant flavonoids and high levels of carvacrol, a key ingredient in thyme that both suppresses inflammation and fights bacteria in the body.[2]

Spicy Ginger Cools Inflammation

Chronic inflammation is linked to an increased risk of cancer. A study published in Cancer Prevention Research showed that extracts of ginger root could be developed as a therapeutic tool in the prevention of colon cancer. The study consisted of 30 participants who were randomly assigned either a placebo pill or a ginger root supplement (2 grams) taken daily. After the research period of 28 days, scientists measured colon inflammation levels in the patients, and discovered statistically significant reductions in inflammation markers in the ginger extract group.[3]

The antioxidants in ginger could also help relieve muscle pain induced by inflammation. Research appearing in the Journal of Pain indicated ginger acts in a similar way to nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Conducted by the University of Georgia and Georgia College and State University, the study researchers enrolled college students to perform specific exercises. As well, one group of students received daily ginger supplements and a second group consumed a placebo. The students who received ginger reported lower intensity of exercise-induced muscle pain.[4]

Quote to Inspire

"An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves."

Bill Vaughan

References and sources:

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2. Carvacrol, a component of thyme oil, activates PPAR-gamma and suppresses COX-2 expression - Journal of Lipid Research, January, 2010.

3. Ginger Root Supplement Reduced Colon Inflammation Markers - American Association for Cancer Research, Press Release, October 11, 2011.

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