



Naturopathic News

Dr. Jennifer Salib Huber
BSc, P.Dt, ND

Naturopathic Doctor
Alderney Chiropractic
Dartmouth, NS
(902)464-2225

Winter 2006
Volume 2, Issue 1

Copies also available at:

www.pillarsofhealth.ca

Inside this Issue

- 1** Asthma & Vitamin C
- 2** Probiotics – More Good News!
- 2** Vitamin D and Bone Health
- 2** Focus on Ginger
- 3** Menopause : A Naturopathic Perspective
- 4** All about www.pillarsofhealth.ca
- 4** Recipe of the Month
- 4** Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

Dr. Jennifer Salib Huber is available for complementary 15- minute consultations if you would like learn more about Naturopathic Medicine. New patients are always welcome.

Asthma & Vitamin C

A recent study in the journal *Respiratory Medicine* has found that people may require less inhaled medication if they also take Vitamin C.

Inhaled corticosteroids are the most commonly prescribed medications for asthma, but long-term use is associated with a number of undesirable side effects.

The results of the study suggest that supplementing with Vitamin C may reduce the amount of steroid drugs needed to keep asthma under control.

92 adults who were currently being treated with inhaled corticosteroids were supplemented with Vitamin C. Over the course of 10 weeks, the dose of corticosteroid was gradually reduced.

Those who had received the Vitamin C were able to reduce their intake of corticosteroid without losing symptom control

The adrenal glands are responsible for producing the body's own corticosteroid hormones. Research suggests that the adrenals require vitamin C to make these hormones. Thus it makes sense that taking a vitamin C supplement could

support the body's own production of adrenal corticosteroids, possibly reducing the amount of hormone needed in drug form.

People taking asthma medications should never abruptly discontinue their steroid medications, even if they are taking vitamin C. Rapid withdrawal from steroid medications can cause serious health problems. Always work with the prescribing doctor before making adjustments to prescription medications.



More Good News about Probiotics

Probiotics are supplements containing beneficial active bacterial cultures. Long-known to be useful in treating intestinal conditions, a new study (*Environmental Health*, 2004) highlights the effect that "good bacteria" also have on the immune system.

Workers who supplemented with the probiotic *Lactobacillus reuteri* took less sick-leave from their

jobs than workers who took placebo,

Over the course of 80 days, 181 volunteers took either the liquid probiotic or a placebo. The participants kept a symptom diary to record any intestinal or respiratory infection, including colds and flus. They also recorded how often they reported sick for work.

The group that received the placebo reported sick-leave rate of 26.4%, while the group receiving the probiotic only reported a rate of only 10.6%

Probiotic bacteria can adhere to the walls of the large intestine, where they may inhibit the growth of other bacteria, such as those that cause infections. They may also stimulate certain cells of the immune system to fight infection, and have been shown to reduce the severity and shorten the length of infectious diarrhea in children.

How to include probiotics in your diet? Fermented foods such as yoghurt and kefir are easily incorporated into your diet. It is also possible to obtain probiotics in supplement form.



Vitamin D as important as Calcium

We all know that calcium is important for building strong bones and teeth. More recently, the role of Vitamin D has been re-evaluated.

To maintain normal calcium metabolism, a person's vitamin D status appears to be more important than supplementing with calcium, according to a new study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The results suggest that Vitamin D levels may provide more protection against osteoporosis than taking calcium every day.

It might surprise you to read that up to 40% of the population may be Vitamin D deficient.

The main cause of low vitamin D status is lack of sun exposure. Many people spend the bulk of their time indoors and those who do go outside often cover themselves with clothing or wear sunscreen.

This study measured the levels of calcium and vitamin D in the blood of 944 healthy adults. People were divided into 2 groups: 1) according to calcium intake (less than 800 mg per day, 800 to 1,200 mg per day, and greater than 1,200 mg per day) and 2) according to the level of Vitamin D in their blood (below normal, marginal, and normal).

Better vitamin D status was found to be associated with more efficient calcium metabolism, whereas the association between calcium intake and efficiency of calcium metabolism was not statistically significant.

The bottom line is that as long as you are not Vitamin D deficient, taking more than 800 mg of calcium may not be necessary. However, if the levels of Vitamin D are low, high calcium intake does not ensure strong bones.

In addition to calcium and vitamin D, a number of other nutrients have been shown to play a role in bone health. These include magnesium, manganese, zinc, copper, boron, strontium, silicon, vitamin K, folic acid, vitamin B12, phosphorus, and vitamin C. Maintaining strong bones requires adequate intake of all of these nutrients.



Focus on Ginger

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) has been used as a medicinal herb for centuries. Many know ginger for its ability to reduce nausea, but over the past 25 years, research has shown that ginger is also potent anti-inflammatory agent.

Ginger seems to have an affinity for the gastrointestinal tract. Not only does it help relieve nausea, it can also assist the digestive process by stimulating digestive juices and reducing gas and bloating. Try drinking a cup of

ginger tea after a large or heavy meal. For sweet ginger tea, add 1 tsp of honey.

As an anti-inflammatory herb, several studies have shown that it can reduce the pain associated with joint and muscle pain by lowering the body's level of natural pain-causing compounds called prostaglandins.

Down with a cold? Don't forget that ginger is a natural anti-histamine and decongestant. It's often included in herbal decongestant blends that are designed for sinusitis and other respiratory complaints.

To include ginger in your diet, try adding it to stir-frys and soups. Or, grate a 1-2" piece of ginger and boil in 1.5 cups of water for 10 minutes. Because ginger is a root, it needs to be boiled to release the active ingredients. Ginger is also available as a standardized extract.

Menopause: A Naturopathic Perspective

For women who are seeking alternatives treating the symptoms of menopause, Naturopathic Medicine can address the physical and emotional symptoms that many women experience. Often we can address menopausal symptoms through a combination of dietary changes, botanical medicine, acupuncture and homeopathy.

No two menopausal experiences are alike. For some women, the transition is short and relatively easy, while others experience a prolonged transition from pre-

and peri-menopausal to post-menopausal, often bothered by symptoms for several years. The best time to start thinking about menopause is in the pre- and peri-menopausal years.

Menopause is a natural transition, one that your body starts preparing for long before hot flashes appear. Ensuring hormonal balance and a healthy nurturing diet is key.

Plastics, pesticides and herbicides contain chemicals which are known as xenoestrogens. The xenoestrogens are stronger than your body's estrogen and can exacerbate menopausal symptoms because they widen the gap between levels of estrogen and progesterone. In the peri-menopausal years, the blood levels of the hormone progesterone will decrease first. Furthermore, xenoestrogens may contribute to an increased risk of hormone sensitive cancers such as breast and endometrial cancer. Choose organic foods when possible and minimize contact between foods and plastics. Avoid heating and storing foods in plastic containers and don't rely on soft plastic water bottles on a regular basis.

The liver is the primary organ by which hormones are metabolized. Foods that support the liver's detoxification pathways will go a long way towards a smooth transition through menopause. Specifically, foods from the brassica family of vegetables (cabbage, brussels sprouts, broccoli) contain sulfur compounds which help support liver function. Avoid unhealthy fats like trans fats found in hydrogenated oils and limit saturated fat intake. Instead,

include healthy fats like those found in olive oil, flax oil, fish and nuts. Spicy foods and alcohol can intensify hot flashes, so best to avoid them until you know how you react.

Several herbs can be used to help maintain a healthy hormone balance and can reduce the severity of the most common menopausal symptoms. These herbs include Black Cohosh, Vitex agnus-castus, Trifolium pratense and Dong quai to name a few. Most women experience the most benefit from a combination of herbs specifically chosen for their symptoms. A Naturopathic Doctor can help find the combination that works best for you.

In addition to working with obvious menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and perimenopausal arthritis, it is important to determine individual risk factors for silent conditions which often occur in perimenopause, such as cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

Always remember that menopause is a natural process, one that your body can prepare for.



Pillarsofhealth.ca

As some of you may have noticed, in January of this year I launched www.pillarsofhealth.ca. I designed this website to provide information about Naturopathic Medicine for new patients, and to be a source of information and resources for current patients. In the newsletter section, you'll find links to current and past newsletters. Every month, I plan to include an article that addresses up-to-date news in the world of complementary and alternative medicine.

On the links page, you will find links to recipe pages, information about Naturopathic Medicine and how it is regulated as well as pages which describe the treatments provided by Naturopathic Doctors.

In the coming months I plan to offer a bi-monthly electronic newsletter. If you are interested in subscribing, please e-mail Dr.salibhuber@pillarsofhealth.ca

Stay tuned for upcoming seminars and workshops, such as the 2-hour "Introduction to Cleansing and Detoxification" coming in March.

Recipe of the Month

15 – Minute Ginger Chicken Stir-Fry

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup chopped scallion
2 TBS fresh minced ginger
2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts cut into bite size pieces
1½ cups sliced fresh shiitake mushrooms
4 cups chopped bok choy
2 TBS soy sauce
1 TBS rice vinegar
salt and white pepper to taste
pinch of red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS:

1. Stir-fry scallion in a stainless steel wok or sauté pan for 2 minutes and add ginger. Continue to stir fry for another minute and add chicken stirring constantly.
2. After about 2-3 minutes add shiitake mushrooms and bok choy. Continue to stir fry for another 3-4 minutes and add soy sauce, rice vinegar, salt and pepper. Serve.

Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

Naturopathic Medicine is a natural approach to health and healing that recognizes the integrity of the whole person.

1. First Do No Harm

Therapeutic actions should be complementary to and synergistic with the healing process.

2. The Healing Power of Nature

The body has an inherent ability to establish, maintain, and restore health. The healing process is ordered and intelligent; nature heals through the response of the life force.

3. Identify the Cause

Illness does not occur without cause. Symptoms express the body's attempt to heal, but are not the cause of disease. Causes may occur on many levels including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

4. Heal the Whole Person

The harmonious functioning of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects are essential to recovery from and prevention of disease.

5. Doctor as Teacher

A cooperative doctor-patient relationship has inherent therapeutic value. The physician is a catalyst for healthful change, empowering and motivating the patient.

6. Prevention is the Best Cure

The ultimate goal of any health care system should be prevention of disease. This is accomplished through education and promotion of life-habits that create good health.