

Can Walnuts Benefit Cardio Health?

In the July 2009 edition of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers conducted a literature review and meta-analysis¹ regarding the benefits of walnuts. Thirteen studies were selected which included 365 participants. On average, the diets lasted anywhere from four to twenty-four weeks, with walnuts providing anywhere from 10% to 24% of total calories. When compared to controlled diets, those individuals who consumed walnuts showed a significantly greater decrease in LDL cholesterol and in total cholesterol. HDL cholesterol and triglycerides were not significantly affected by these walnut diets. The authors concluded that overall, high walnut enriched diets significantly decreased total and LDL cholesterol for the duration of these short term trials. This study, combined with numerous others, proves that walnuts promote health. This is probably due to the fact they have healthy fats, fiber, protein, magnesium, potassium and many other health promoting nutrients. I recommend at least five servings per week in place of processed toxic junk foods most people over consume.

The July 2009 edition of the journal *Cancer Causes and Control* has just published a study² in which researchers examined the association between green tea consumption and risk of developing abnormal cellular growth of the uterus. A total of 152 women with biopsy-proven abnormal cellular growth of the uterus were compared to a control of 285 healthy women. A very significant inverse relationship between green tea consumption and the risk of developing this abnormal cellular growth was observed. For example, those women who consumed on average one cup of green tea daily reduced their risk of abnormal cellular growth by 23%. The risk decreased further by 39% for those women consuming two to three cups of green tea per day. In the group that consumed four or more cups a day, the risk of developing abnormal cellular growth of the uterus was decreased by a whopping 67%, which statistically was highly significant.

There was another great article³ published in the July 2009 edition of the *Annals of Epidemiology* regarding vitamin D. The authors noted that individuals with higher serum levels of circulating vitamin D had a substantially lower incidence rate of abnormal cellular growth of the colon, breast, ovary, kidney, pancreas, prostate and other abnormal cellular growths. They projected that by raising the minimum average serum level of vitamin D to 40 ng/ml to 60 ng/ml would prevent approximately 58,000 new cases of abnormal cellular growth of the breast and 49,000 new cases of colon/rectal abnormal cellular growth every year. They also noted that there are no unreasonable risks for intake of 2,000 IU/day of vitamin D3, although I believe that 2,000 IU to 4,000 IU for most people is optimal and safe.

Finally, I'd like to report on a survey⁴ that was just published in the *Nutrition Journal*. The authors found that there have been multiple surveys reporting that dietary supplements are used by a large percentage of the general public, but there have been relatively few surveys looking at the use of dietary supplements among health care professionals. The online survey was conducted in October 2007 by the Council for Responsible Nutrition and included 900 physicians and 277 nurses. It was discovered that in this group of health professionals, 72% of physicians and 89% of nurses used dietary supplements regularly, occasionally or seasonally. About 51% of the physicians and 59% of the nurses used it on a regular basis. The reason given for the use generally was for overall health and wellness. In this particular group, 79% of physicians and 82% of nurses did recommend supplements to their patients.

It would be nice if doctors and nurses across the board recommended nutritional supplementation for their patients. The above study is obviously somewhat biased since

these individuals already had some presumed interest in nutrition. There is a movement afoot in this country to do more things that are preventative and proactive to help optimize health. Our country is not only out of money to pay for expensive drugs, hospitals and surgery, but is also running up massive debt reaching over 12 trillion (1,000 billion equals one trillion) dollars in part because of out of control health care costs and increasing health concerns. We all have to take responsibility for our own well-being, although, obviously if we get into trouble, that is what the health care system is for.

By Dr. Allen S. Josephs