Beyond Simplistic Cholesterol #’s
April 29, 2013

Lately there have been some great strides forward regarding better tests for heart issues. Unfortunately most family doctors are either not aware of these new tests, or choose not to use them, even though they give us better info on what is happening internally. Maybe because they are not attached to a particular drug?

The Cleveland Heart Lab has partnered with Pure Encapsulations (a health practitioner supplement company) to measure certain bio-markers that are predictive of heart issues. Here’s is their joint statement:

**Pure Encapsulations** is committed to producing the most complete line of science-based nutritional supplements. Available through health professionals, finished products are pure and hypo-allergenic to best optimize the long-term health of the most sensitive patients.* Pure Encapsulations is an industry leader in quality, with an extensive raw material and finished product testing program that includes analysis for identity, potency, environmental contaminants, oxidation and more by certified third-party laboratories. Pure Encapsulations manufactures its own products in an FDA-inspected, NSF-GMP registered facility in Sudbury, Massachusetts.

**Cleveland HeartLab Inc.** is a CAP-accredited and CLIA-certified clinical reference laboratory that provides novel and affordable testing developed at the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic. Cleveland HeartLab is an established leader in the cardiometabolic testing arena and offers proprietary testing such as Myeloperoxidase (MPO) that examines the health and integrity of the artery wall. Their testing expands the scope of cardiovascular assessment beyond standard lipid panels.

**Our Vision**
- Promote the collaboration of complementary health systems by coupling Cleveland HeartLab Cardiovascular Biomarker Testing Profiles with Pure Encapsulations research-based, cardiometabolic nutritional supplements.*
- Provide integrative solutions for cardiometabolic health providers (primary care physicians, internists, cardiologists, nurse practitioners, oral-systemic health providers, naturopaths, nutritionists, pharmacists) and corporate wellness programs.
- Develop The PureHeart™ Initiative to include a consortium of health experts from the private sector, academic institutions, medical associations, laboratories, and integrative health companies to combine and share expertise and knowledge to foster the advancement of cardiometabolic care.

**Your doctor can order information** about the tests and SUPPLEMENTS not drugs to treat potential problems by going [HERE](#).

And here’s another great test, described by Dr. Mercola:

Cholesterol has been blamed for just about every case of heart disease for the last 20 years, when in reality, you need cholesterol in order to be healthy; your body uses cholesterol for cell membranes, hormones, neurotransmitters and overall nerve function

- Your total cholesterol number is not a good indicator of heart disease risk.
  One of the most important tests you can get to determine your risk is the NMR lipoprofile, which measures your LDL particle number. This test also has other markers that can help determine if you have insulin resistance, which is a primary cause of elevated LDL particle number and increased heart disease risk
- Research published over the past 10 or 15 years suggests that neither saturated fat nor high-cholesterol foods will raise your cholesterol serum levels
- The primary cause of heart disease is not high cholesterol but insulin and leptin resistance, which increase LDL particle number via a couple of different mechanisms. Poor thyroid function can also directly increase LDL particle number, and should be checked if your LDL particle number is high
- Insulin and leptin resistance is caused by factors inherent in our modern
The Art (and Necessity) of Fixing Our Own Meals

April 29, 2013

Here’s a review of Micheal Pollan’s new book via an interview with him. Good article; another good book on food.

Having Trouble Finding A Word To Describe This!

April 23, 2013

Because we are inundated with hyperbole about the latest outrage, whether it’s about something genuinely awful like the Boston bombs, or something fake awful like some celebrity’s fill-in-the-blank. It is hard not to feel compassion/caring fatigue.

But this takes my personal cake today: GMO wheat with the very real possibility of affecting our genes, and even worse, how those genes express. And because we have no labeling laws, you won’t know you are eating it….and wheat is in just about everything packaged.

So, here is the summary:

Research conducted on a new type of GM wheat showed with “no doubt” that molecules created in the wheat, which are intended to silence wheat genes to change its carbohydrate content, may match human genes and potentially silence them.

* Experts warned that eating the wheat could lead to significant changes in the way glucose and carbohydrates are stored in the human body, which could be potentially deadly for children and lead to serious illness in adults.
* Long-term studies are needed before the wheat is released into the environment and the human food chain – but a new review states that the risks are still not being adequately assessed.

And HERE is the whole article.

More Flawed Studies

April 16, 2013

It wouldn’t be so important except that the media seems to latch onto the worst of the flawed nutrition studies, and then tells us to change our behavior based upon these bad studies…sigh. So this one is about red meat, and, are you ready, was based upon FIVE meat-eaters and ONE vegan. You cannot make this stuff up!

Anyways, here’s the info thanks to our friends at Alliance for Natural Health:

Latest “Red Meat Study” Doubly Flawed

April 16, 2013

Eating red meat is a popular target for nutritionists, but Alliance for Natural Health’s latest article by Anne Wigmore makes the case why they’re wrong.

The researchers of the study cited in the article from Bloomberg News, which was widely reported in the national media recently, base their conclusions on a study sensor: Anyways, here’s the info thanks to our friends at Alliance for Natural Health:

Based upon FIVE meat-eaters and ONE vegan. You cannot make this stuff up!
No, meat is not unsafe—nor is L-carnitine.

A recent study published in the journal Nature Medicine associates the amino acid L-carnitine, found in red meat, supplements, and sports supplements, with the risk of heart disease. Here are some examples of what the media said about it: The Daily Mail (UK): “Red meat nutrient used in weight-loss and muscle-building supplements could cause heart disease”! The Dallas News: “Put down that steak! (and energy drinks, too); the carnitine in these foods may increase risk of cardiovascular disease”!

Here is the gist of the study:

» a diet high in L-carnitine promotes the growth of certain bacteria that metabolize the amino acid;
» during that metabolism, an organic compound called trimethylamine-N-oxide (TMAO) is produced in the blood; and
» this compound increases risk of heart disease.

The study further states that vegetarians and vegans have different gut bacteria, which do not produce a burst of TMAO after consuming L-carnitine.

There is a lot to find fault with in this study.

First, there’s the question of the study participants. Most of the study was done on mice, though there was a human component—a tiny sample of only six people, five meat-eaters and one vegan. That’s right, their conclusion that vegetarians and vegans have different gut bacteria that don’t produce a burst of TMAO after consuming L-carnitine was based on just one individual.

We also don’t know how healthy the five meat-eaters were in this study. The study found that the red meat eaters did not produce TMAO after a course of antibiotics. This suggests that these subjects’ immune systems were already damaged—not that all meat eaters’ are. At the same time, it is still unclear whether TMAO production is caused by eating red meat at all (this was just an assumption), and whether raised TMAO levels actually cause heart disease.

Second, the idea that L-carnitine causes heart disease conflicts with other, better evidence. A large and recent meta-analysis, published in the journal Mayo Clinic Proceedings, suggests that L-carnitine is helpful for heart disease, not a cause. This meta-analysis specifically tested L-carnitine on hard outcomes in humans who had already experienced acute myocardial infarction, and found that L-carnitine was associated with significant reduction in death from all causes and a highly significant reduction in ventricular arrhythmias and angina attacks following a heart attack, compared with placebo or control. In other words, L-carnitine, far from being harmful to the heart, actually heals it!

None of the media reports we saw bothered to mention any of the positive effects of L-carnitine—even those mentioned in the study itself. Its essential function is to transport fatty acids into our mitochondria, which may be why it is so beneficial to heart patients. It also helps with kidney disease and male infertility, reduces fat mass, increases muscle mass, and reduces fatigue. In elderly patients, it also helps energy metabolism and improves neurotransmitter function in the brain.

And if L-carnitine is actually good for us, what about meat? That’s still controversial. But other studies don’t support the conclusion that it harms us. An extremely large meta-analysis published by Circulation (over 1.2 million participants) found that fresh and unprocessed red meat consumption was not associated with increased heart disease risk, stroke, or diabetes.

In addition, this one, much-hyped study makes no differentiation between different types or sources of meat. As we have discussed frequently in the past, industrialized factory farm meat is very different from organic, local, grass-fed meat in its nutrient composition. Meat from CAFOs—that is, confined animal feeding operations—contains twenty times the amount of omega-6 fatty acids (which are associated with inflammation, arthritis, and cancer) than healthier omega-3 fatty acids, have much more fat marbling, and may be full of antibiotics.

Grass-fed beef has nearly seven times more omega-3s than omega-6s, so eaten in moderation, it offers healthier levels of essential fats. Moreover, grass-fed beef is lower in total fat, and higher in vitamin E complex, beta-carotene, thiamine, riboflavin, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and CLA—and these...
differences may have a tremendous impact on both the types of bacteria in the gut and the levels of TMAO produced. But of course, we won’t know about that, because this was never even thought about in the study.

What none of these overhyped media reports—not to mention the study itself—take into account is the reality of bio-individuality. No one diet, and no one selection of supplements, should be advocated for everyone. Only a balanced diet tailored to each individual body’s personal needs will ensure one’s health in the long run.

Tags: flawed nutritional studies, healthy diet, red meat

Allergy Assistance, Part 3
April 10, 2013

from the Alliance for Natural Health comes this excellent article on seasonal allergies, which appear to be getting worse:

According to the Harvard Health Letter, seasonal allergies are starting earlier every year, and pollen counts are rising. At least 36 million people are affected by seasonal allergies each year in the US.

Seasonal allergic rhinitis occurs when one’s immune system overreacts to foreign materials and produces an inflammatory response. Grass, weeds, and trees release tiny pollens into the air, and inhaling them triggers a reaction of your immune system. Floating pollutants such as mold spores and dust mite droppings also contribute (though in warmer climates, this can happen year round).

Uncovering what makes the immune system respond the way it does is important. One theory is that an excessive antigenic stimulus overwhelms the immune system, and this is what leads to an inflammatory response. In other words, a small amount of allergen may not be enough to cause symptoms, but continued exposure—or the exposure of number of antigens—can lead to an overload of the system. This is magnified when one’s immune system is weak (which happens easily when one is tired or stressed or has recently been ill).

There are natural approaches to seasonal allergies that work well:

Calm the allergic response. According to a study in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, subjects who took 2600 mg of MSM (methylsulfonylmethane) found their upper and total respiratory symptoms significantly reduced within seven days, and improvement continued for all thirty days of the study. Also, as Dr. Mercola notes, MSM is 34% sulfur, which can help maintain optimal health. Sulfur helps the body detoxify itself, and helps produce glutathione, an important antioxidant. MSM is extremely safe and can be taken at high doses, even if one’s diet is full of raw vegetables and MSM-rich foods. Some of our staff have found complete relief from allergies with this product, but required higher daily doses than 2600 mg.

Another substance that helps calm down the immune system under a pollen attack is the Alpine herb butterbur. In Scotland, researchers found that butterbur is effective. It can also be used in conjunction with MSM—the sulfur to condition the body, and the herb for acute attacks. Petadolex, a butterbur extract supplement, reduces inflammation so well that it can be used for migraines and other headaches too—it was endorsed as an OTC remedy for migraines by the Academy of Neurology and the American Headache Society after their review of 284 scholarly articles on the subject. Butterbur in the wild contains a potentially toxic substance, but Petadolex has removed it.

Freeze-dried nettles and quercetin are also used to reduce allergic response. They both work—the former sooner, and the latter over time—but they typically reduce rather than eliminate symptoms. Antihistamine drugs were initially developed from quercetin. As is often the case, the drugs had serious side effects (such as drowsiness) while the natural product from which it is derived did not. Another natural product that shows promise is Carnivora, derived from the plant of the same name, although more research needs to be done.

Remove food allergies (which lightens the antigenic load). As the Townsend...
Allergy Assistance, Part 2
April 9, 2013

Even though it is trying to snow today, wind-born pollen, dust and allergens have already begun here in northern New Mexico, and certainly in other places. Although I am (knock on wood) mostly immune to these, many phone calls come in now about what we can do to lessen the effects of hay fever. The previous article is a great visual and explanation of what happens when we react to pollen. If you want to try any of the mentioned supplements, please call me by Sunday evening toll-free @877-286-2970 and I can get you started.

Herbs that are particularly helpful are Andongraphis, Bee Pollen, Black Cumin seeds, Butterbur, Curcumin (standardized extract of Turmeric), Medicinal Mushrooms (especially Cordyceps), Motherwort, Nettles, Peppermint, Rooibus Tea, and Lavender. You can also check out my Allergy Assist.

And here are the references from Part 1.:  

References

Allergy Season Assistance, Part 1
April 9, 2013

NewsCaps
From late spring through early autumn, airborne pollens, grasses and weeds reach their peak. In the nasal passage and airway of sensitive individuals, these particles enlist an immune response typified by the activation of mast cells residing in the tissue lining. Once active, mast cells release prostaglandins, leukotrienes and other immune mediators that influence nasal perfusion and fluid balance (Figure 1). For decades, polyphenols such as quercetin and hesperidin have prevailed as the natural modalities of choice.*

Quercetin, hesperidin and apple polyphenols stabilize mast cell membranes, helping to contain the mediators and restrict their access to the sensitive upper respiratory linings. Support for mast cell membrane integrity is also a mechanism of the complex flavonoid spectrum found in extracts of apple, nettle and other immune-modulating botanicals. Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials have demonstrated that polyphenols, particularly those in the flavonoid subgroup, are highly effective in maintaining healthy vascular permeability and indices of nasal responses.*

In complex patients, balancing the immune response is a focal objective that commands a broad, systemic approach. Immunologic homeostasis is functionally contingent upon healthy bacterial populations of the intestinal epithelia, from which immune signals ramify throughout the body, including the respiratory tract. Accordingly, a meta-analysis involving 9 randomized controlled trials asserted that specific strains of Lactobacilli and Bifidobacteria are effective in preserving nasal and airway function in the presence of common environmental triggers.3*

Figure 1. Environmental particles stimulate production of IgE, which binds and activates mast cells. The active mast cells release mediators upon continual exposure to the particle. Probiotics support homeostasis upstream of these events, maintaining healthy IgE levels. Conversely, flavonoids, such as quercetin and hesperidin, function downstream to support the integrity of the mast cell membrane.*

The Bifidobacterium longum strain BB536 is among the most extensively researched probiotic strains in the context of airborne particle tolerance. Progressive compositional changes in microbial composition after several weeks of oral BB536 supplementation have been demonstrated in tandem with a healthy, balanced immune response. In a randomized, double-blind clinical trial, 44 subjects reporting an existing sensitivity to cedar received BB536 or placebo for 13 weeks during the spring. Significant support was evident in IgE responses and subjective scores relating to the ability of the nasal cavity and airway to tolerate airborne cedar particles. These findings were corroborated by a subsequent study, in which BB536 supplementation maintained the ability to perform normal activities comfortably during repeated exposure.6*

Other probiotic species that have been similarly characterized and validated include B. lactis B40, L. casei, L. acidophilus and L. plantarum. Randomized, double-blind placebo controlled studies have collectively indicated favorable changes in IgE levels and indices of nasal and airway function relative to placebo.7-10 Although the duration of supplementation in most clinical trials is typically 3-4 months, clinically significant benefits have become evident within 4 weeks.6*

To date, the collective body of randomized trials of flavonoids and specific probiotics clearly supports their clinical efficacy. Aller-Essentials provides the flavonoids quercetin and hesperidin methyl chalcone, together with apple polyphenols and clinically researched botanicals for mast cell integrity and healthy nasal function. Probiotic IMM is a shelf-stable blend of B. longum BB536, B. lactis, L. acidophilus, L. casei and L. plantarum. In complex patients, concurrent use of both products offers advanced support from two mechanistic angles. Although formulated specifically for seasonal immune balance, Probiotic IMM promotes healthy gut ecology to support healthy natural defenses, regardless of the time of year.*

Tags: allergies, hayfever, seasonal allergies
Posted in Alternative Health, Articles, Nutritional Supplements | Leave a Comment »

Why The Buffalo Need To Roam Again
April 1, 2013

As I prepare to do my teaching gig this spring, I have been reading a lot of books about diet. Almost all of them agree that grass-fed beef (and that would include bison or buffalo) is an excellent addition to our diet: lean, healthy Omega-3 fatty acid rich high quality protein. Turns out we used to have that naturally in the gigantic buffalo
herds that roamed much of the midwest.

With desertification and aquifer depleting current agricultural practices (not to mention the GMO soy and corn and feedlot beef: unhealthy for all concerned), we are making global warming worse. Here are the highlights of an article that explains this process:

The conversion of large amounts of fertile land to desert has long been thought to be caused by livestock, such as sheep and cattle overgrazing and giving off methane. This has now been shown to be incorrect, as removing animals to protect land speeds up desertification

» Rising population, land turning into desert at a steady clip, and climate change, converge to create a “perfect storm” that threatens life on earth. According to an African ecologist, dramatically increasing the number of grazing livestock is the only thing that can reverse both desertification and climate change

» Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), play a key role in this impending disaster, as large-scale factory farms also directly contribute to environmental pollution

» According to estimates, grazing large herds of livestock on half of the world’s barren or semi-barren grasslands could take enough carbon from the atmosphere to bring us back to preindustrial levels

» A holistic management and planned grazing system has already been implemented in select areas on five continents, with dramatically positive results

If this has whetted your appetite to learn more, GO HERE for the whole article; very worth it!!!

Tags: grass fed beef, halting desertification, natural solutions for global warming

Posted in Links, Organic food and farming | Leave a Comment »

Please Help GMO Labeling Campaign In Washington State
NOW, TODAY
April 1, 2013

Over the protests of hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens, Congress cut a backroom deal with Monsanto last week that allows the biotech giant to plant genetically engineered crops and seeds, no matter how harmful they may be to our health and environment. Not even a federal court will be able to stop them.

The “Farmer Assurance Program” is hidden in the HR 933 Continuing Resolution, a stopgap spending bill to keep the government running through the end of September. But this sneaky provision, written by Monsanto itself, is better known as the “Monsanto Protection Act.” Because it does just that.

With Congress and the FDA protecting Monsanto, who will protect us?

We will. And one way we’ll do it is by passing statewide citizens’ initiatives to require mandatory labeling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

We need your help today. In November, voters in Washington State will decide on I-522, a citizens’ ballot initiative to label GMOs. Because this initiative is so critical to all of us, the OCA has pledged $500,000 to the campaign. A generous donor has offered $250,000 to help us get there, but only if we raise the first $250,000 by April 1.

Thanks to the amazing response so far from thousands of individuals, as of this morning, we have raised almost $231,000. That means we need to raise $19,000 more by midnight tonight. Can you help? You can donate online with a credit card or Paypal. Or you can mail a check. Or phone in your donation. (Mail-In donations postmarked by midnight April 1 will count toward the matching gift.)

This latest free pass for Monsanto is a slap in the face to consumers who have fought for the past 20 years for more, not less, testing and transparency around GMOs. From the moment Monsanto convinced the FDA that there was “no substantial difference” between genetically engineered crops and their non-GE counterparts, we all have been unwitting lab rats in one big biotech experiment. The FDA does not test GMOs for health and safety. Instead, it relies on the biotech industry’s word that GMOs pose no health threats. Even though scientists warn that this is not true.

The assault on our health, on our right to know, will not end until we pass GMO labeling laws with real teeth, not a watered-down, loophole-riddled federal law that, like the Monsanto Protection Act, would no doubt be written by the biotech industry.

In just this past year, thanks to all of you, we have made much progress in the battle for labeling. But we’re missing one critical victory, a victory Monsanto is
desperate to deprive us of: the first statewide GMO labeling law.

Matching gifts of $250,000 don’t come along every day. This is a brilliant opportunity to double every donation, no matter how large or small, toward a victory in Washington State. The campaign is young. If we can fund it now, we’ll be able to reach more voters with the truth, before our opponents permanently sway them with their lies and misinformation.

Please help us raise $19,000 by midnight. Every dollar you contribute will go directly to support the I-522 campaign.

Thank you for being a part of this revolutionary food movement. You make it all worthwhile!

In solidarity,                          Ronnie Cummins
                                          National Director, Organic Consumers Association and Organic Consumers Fund

P.S. Just $19,000 more by midnight, and we’ll receive a $250,000 matching gift toward the I-522 GMO labeling initiative. Please donate today. (Mail-In donations postmarked by midnight April 1 will count toward the matching gift.)

Paid for by the Organic Consumers Fund Committee to

Tags: GMO labeling

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