

Got (Organic) Milk?

What you should
know about regular
milk by Chrystle Fiedler

Do you know the difference between regular milk and organic milk? Organic milk comes from cows raised from birth on organic feed. The animals are not given antibiotics or hormones—including recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone, or rBGH. “This rBGH is an artificial hormone injected into cows to increase milk production,” says Patty Lovera, assistant director of Food & Water



Easing Endometriosis?



Endometriosis, a common cause of infertility and pelvic pain, is difficult to treat. But a study at Kanazawa University in Japan showed that an antioxidant extract from the bark of a maritime pine tree—it's marketed as Pycnogenol—reduced endometriosis symptoms by 33 percent. Researcher Takafumi Kohama, M.D., says, “This could provide a safe and effective natural treatment option.” Ask your doctor for more information.

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Watch in Washington, D.C. When the FDA approved it in 1994, rBGH was controversial because injection in a cow triggers an increase of another hormone, IGF-1, a growth factor similar to insulin. “Some studies draw a connection between IGF-1 and a higher risk of breast, prostate and colon cancer,” says Lovera. The hormone rBGH is now banned in Canada, the European Union, Australia, Japan and elsewhere due to concerns about the possible negative effects on humans and cows.

Berry Smoother

In the not-too-distant future, you could be using an after-sun treatment containing black raspberries to help prevent skin cancer. Far-fetched? Not so, say researchers at the Ohio State University Medical Center. They've shown that a topical compound with these raspberries slows the growth of squamous skin cell carcinomas in mice exposed to ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation.

Squamous cell carcinoma, one form of skin cancer, is the country's second most common cancer, with about 250,000 new cases annually. (Basal cell carcinoma causes most forms of non-melanoma skin cancer.) Senior study author Anne VanBuskirk, Ph.D., assistant professor of surgical oncology, says squamous cell carcinoma may be due, in part, to an



inflammatory response that gets “stuck in overdrive, perhaps as a result of oxidative stress or DNA damage.” Black raspberry extract might prevent skin cancer by reducing this response. In the OSU study, an ointment infused with the fruit “reduced inflammatory damage and the growth and spread of tumors,” says VanBuskirk. The key agents in black raspberries are anthocyanins, powerful antioxidants that bestow a dark color and reduce UVB-caused oxidative damage to the skin, according to this study.

“We'd like to formulate the extract into a lotion or gel to reduce inflammation from the sun and the rate of skin cancer,” she says. “But that's going to take a while.” ■

Chrystle Fiedler is the author of the upcoming *Complete Idiot's Guide to Natural Remedies*.

Brain Candy

Eating right is good for your body, mind and mood

by Chrystle Fiedler

Most of us don't need another reason to love chocolate, but we have one anyway. A recent study at Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia ("The Effects of Chocolate Consumption on Enhancing Cognitive Performance") shows that it's good brain food. Participants ate three ounces of milk or dark chocolate and then completed a variety of computer-based tests that assessed things like problem-solving ability and attention span. The result? "Scores for verbal



Are You a Fiber Fibber?



Fiber is the indigestible carbohydrate found in plant cell walls. It's good for digestion, cholesterol control and nutritional balance. The American Dietetic Association reports that though we should take in about 25 grams of fiber per day, we average only 12 grams. For a shopping list of fiber-rich foods—you'll be surprised by the tasty options—stop by our Web site at HealthyUpdates.com/remedy

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and visual memory were significantly higher among those participants who consumed milk chocolate," says Bryan Raudenbush, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology. Why? "It may be because milk chocolate has a lot of stimulating chemicals like caffeine and theobromine. It also has a high sugar content. Sugar equates to energy." Both milk and dark chocolate were shown to improve impulse control and reaction time. "They improved computer-based cognitive tasks, verbal and design memory and problem solving," he adds.

Psoriasis Relief

Psoriasis affects up to 7.5 million people in the U.S. There are several forms of the disease, and current topical medications can aggravate existing psoriasis or irritate and discolor skin. Now relief may come in the form of Oregon grape, aka *Mahonia aquifolium*. A recent study shows it provides relief from mild to moderate psoriasis. "A *Mahonia aquifolium*-based cream provides improvement equal to or better than some prescription treatments for mild to moderate plaque psoriasis," says researcher Howard Donsky, M.D. ■



A BREATH OF FRESH MILK

Is your adolescent getting enough vitamin D? Researchers found that teens who had a low dietary intake of vitamin D (157 IU or less per day) registered significantly lower lung function than their peers who took in more D per day.

"The teenage years are a crucial period in terms of protecting health," says Jane Burns, Sc.D., a research fellow in environmental health at Harvard School of Public Health. "If teens don't achieve their optimal lung function during this time, they may be more likely to get chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases such as emphysema as adults."

Drinking milk is a good way to get enough of this nutrient: One cup of vitamin D-fortified milk provides half the recommended daily dose for teens.

Diabetes Connection Need to find out about the latest in glucose monitors? Visit HealthyUpdates.com/remedy

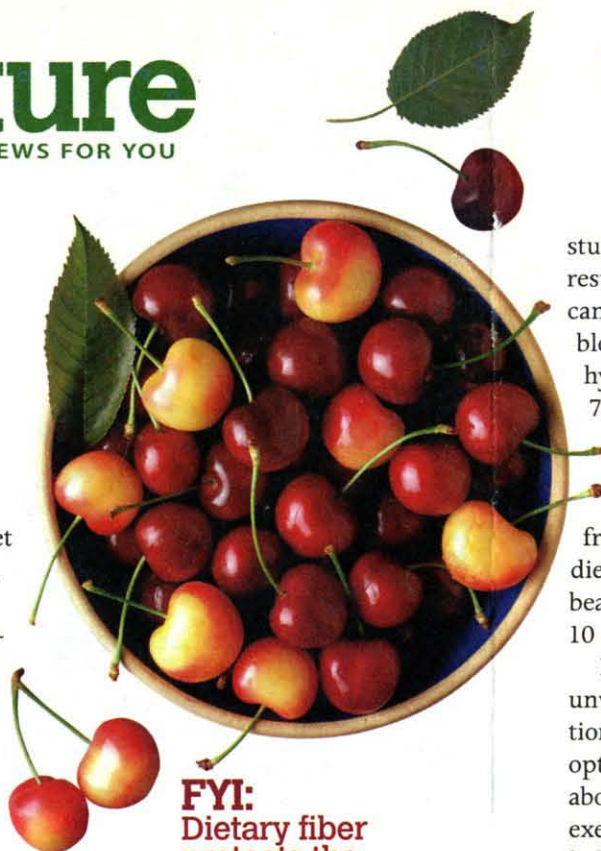
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Dial It Down!

Need to lower your blood pressure? Eat more fiber

by Chrystle Fiedler

Fiber up, pressure down! According to a recent article in the *Journal of Hypertension*, if you eat a high-fiber diet you can lower your blood pressure and even improve healthy blood pressure levels. "All the data support the conclusion that adding fiber to the diet has a healthy effect on blood pressure," says Seamus Whelton, lead author and a medical student at the Tulane University School of Medicine. Whelton and his team analyzed data from 25 clinical trials with 1,477 adult



FYI:
Dietary fiber protects the heart and helps the digestion.

Gotta Get Some Grape Seed

Grape-seed extract may help protect the brain against age-related oxidative damage, a risk factor for dementia, according to a study out of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). "The antioxidants in grape seed shift oxidation away from proteins and lipids in cells or tissues. That may protect certain organs such as the brain, which are especially vulnerable to oxidative stress," says senior author Helen Kim, Ph.D., of UAB and the Purdue-UAB Botanicals Center for Dietary Supplements Research.



study participants. "The most striking result was that fiber intake significantly reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure in patients with hypertension. And people who ate 7.2 to 18.9 grams of fiber a day had a reduction in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure."

Eating more vegetables and fruits may provide the best boost to dietary fiber intake. A cup of black beans has more than 19 grams of fiber; 10 cherries contain 1.3 grams of fiber.

If you have hypertension and are unwilling or unable to consume additional fiber, fiber in pill form is an option. Also, speak to your physician about lifestyle changes—especially exercise, since it's also been shown to help reduce blood pressure.

Awake at the Wheel

The sweet smell of peppermint and cinnamon may make drivers more alert and feel less frustration, anxiety and fatigue. Researchers conjecture that adding these aromas to cars' interiors may help reduce the 100,000 highway accidents each year that result from inattentive drivers and those who fall asleep at the wheel. ■

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GREEN TEA EXTRACT

Here's one more potential medical use for green tea: A new study in the journal *Clinical Cancer Research* reports that green tea extract may help standard anticancer agents by targeting cancer cells in the bladder, while leaving healthy cells alone. Bladder cancer is the fifth most common cancer in the United States, with about 56,000 new cases diagnosed each year. "We showed that green tea extract inhibits cancer cell growth, which was not surprising, but when it comes to bladder cancer, it appears that it has additional anticancer effects," says Jian Yu Rao, M.D., a member of UCLA's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center and associate professor of pathology and laboratory medicine. Although not all scientists agree that green tea is a useful remedy, there is speculation that the extract keeps cancer cells localized so they are easier to treat.