

Healthy Connections

A PROJECT OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE'S EDUCATION & DEFENSE FUND

JULY 2007

12 Secrets To A Long Healthy Life

By Sue Frederick

We all want to feel young and healthy forever. Fortunately, a wide variety of natural supplements is available to help us maintain an active, healthy lifestyle into maturity.

The most widely accepted theory of aging is the free radical theory. This hypothesis claims destruction caused by free radicals, molecules that bind to and destroy cells, contributes to aging. Most free radicals in the body are toxic oxygen molecules. Ironically, oxygen, the element that sustains us, is also responsible for aging since it oxidizes in the body.

Any substance that significantly delays or inhibits oxidation is an antioxidant. Several animal studies have shown that dietary anti-oxidants can increase life expectancy. We already know that antioxidant nutrients reduce the risk of getting cancer, heart disease, and many diseases linked to aging including cataracts, macular degeneration and arthritis.

The three most recognizable antioxidants are vitamins C, E and beta-carotene.

* **Vitamin C** is the most popular vitamin supplement in the U.S. The Recommended Daily Allowance for vitamin C is only 60 mg., however, proponents such as the late Nobel Prize winner Dr. Linus Pauling, recommend megadoses to overcome disease and prolong life.

Vitamin C helps control LDL (the bad) cholesterol, and boosts immune function by raising the body's levels of the antioxidant glutathione which is essential for proper immune function. Vitamin C plus vitamin E and riboflavin (vitamin B2) may also help prevent formation of at least one major form of cataract.

* **Vitamin E** is the second most widely used individual vitamin in the U.S. Two recent studies showed that middle-aged men and women who took vitamin E supplements had fewer heart attacks than those who didn't.

Another study concluded that a dime's worth of vitamin E seems to reduce heart attacks by 75

percent when taken daily by people with heart disease. Further research shows that high levels of vitamin E help prevent the intellectual decline that can come with aging.

* **Beta-carotene**, first isolated from carrots a century and a half ago, is the most active of the antioxidant carotenoids. It works in partnership with vitamins E and C to prevent the diseases of old age.

A landmark study found that people with low blood levels of beta-carotene were four times more likely to develop a specific deadly type of lung cancer due to smoking. Another study found that people who ate a high level of fruits and vegetables containing beta-carotene had a lower risk of macular degeneration.

Other important nutrients that promote longevity include:

* **Selenium** -- A trace mineral that functions primarily as a component of the antioxidant glutathione. Works with vitamin E in preventing free radical damage to cell membranes. Impressive evidence indicates that

supplemental selenium may help prevent cancer.

* **Calcium** -- The most abundant mineral in the body, its major function is building and maintaining bone and teeth. Numerous studies indicate that calcium supplements are useful in preventing and slowing osteoporosis, the progressive loss of bone mass as we age.

* **Zinc** -- About one in three seemingly healthy Americans over age 50 has a mild zinc deficiency not detectable in typical blood tests. Zinc functions as an antioxidant, scavenging free radical molecules in the body. It also stimulates the thymus gland to produce more of the important hormone thymulin.

One study found that zinc-deficient subjects between 50 and 80 who took 30 mg. of zinc gluconate every day for six months had a 40 percent increase in thymulin output and activity. In addition, several key enzymes at work in the retina require zinc for optimal functioning.

* **Coenzyme Q10** -- The best-documented use of this powerful antioxidant is for treating congestive heart failure. It may also be useful for other cardiovascular conditions. In addition, CoQ10 has been suggested as a treatment for hypertension.

* **Ginkgo biloba**, an herb made from the leaves of the ginkgo tree, is one of the most powerful herbs for the mind. Medical use of ginkgo can be traced back almost 5,000 years to the beginnings of Chinese medicine. With 400 published studies and reports, as well as several books, ginkgo extract is one of the best-researched herbal medicines in the world.

Ginkgo has the ability to concentrate in brain tissues, which has a beneficial effect on many aspects of brain function, especially symptoms associated with aging. A number of studies show ginkgo significantly improves alertness, mood, memory, headaches, vertigo and intellectual capacity.

A recent study found that ginkgo may improve the memory of Alzheimer's disease patients. The herb has also been shown to protect cell membranes in the brain and other tissues against free radical damage.

* **Ginseng** is another valuable herb for mental clarity and memory enhancement. Known as the longevity herb, ginseng is used regularly by elderly Chinese men and women to slow the aging process. Tests show ginseng increases learning and memory in animals. It also appears to stimulate the immune system.

One Soviet researcher has studied ginseng for nearly 30 years. He

writes that ginseng "possesses a remarkably wide range of therapeutic activities... protecting the body against stress, radiation and various chemical toxins... and increasing general resistance."

* **Bilberry** -- Used throughout Europe for the treatment of poor night vision and day blindness. Regular use of bilberry is also thought to help prevent or treat other eye diseases such as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and cataracts. The herb contains powerful substances known as anthocyanosides that have a special attraction to the retina. They have been shown to strengthen blood vessel walls and reduce inflammation.

* **Garlic** -- The world's oldest medicine (after ephedra). Studies have found that certain forms of garlic can lower total cholesterol levels by 9 to 12 percent, as well as improve the ratio of good and bad cholesterol. Garlic also appears to reduce blood pressure, protect against free radicals and slow blood coagulation. Preliminary evidence suggests that regular use of garlic may help prevent cancer.

* **Hawthorn** -- The European plant medicine of choice for steadying and strengthening the heart. Hawthorn is widely regarded as a safe and effective treatment for the early stages of congestive heart failure.



Convenient Hours:
Monday - Friday
6 AM - 9 PM
Sat 8 AM-4 PM
Sun. 12-4 PM
1327 9th St. So.
St. Petersburg, FL
727-824-5670

**African Peoples Education
& Defense Fund**
1245 18th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33705
727-821-2437
www.apedf.org