



Natural Standard

The Authority on Integrative Medicine

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Spirulina Study Indicates Positive Effect on Allergic Rhinitis



Researchers at University of California at Davis, School of Medicine have discovered that a spirulina-based dietary supplement demonstrates a protective effect on allergic rhinitis. In a randomized double-blinded crossover study versus placebo, a spirulina-based dietary supplement (Earthrise Nutritionals, Inc., Irvine, CA) was used on patients with allergic rhinitis. Results were assessed by the production of cytokines: interleukin (IL)-4, interferon (IFN)-gamma, and IL-2.

These cytokines are critical in regulating immunoglobulin E-mediated allergy. Previous studies have shown that *in vitro* cultures of spirulina, when tested on human peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs), modulated the production of cytokines.

In this trial, 36 subjects with a history of allergic rhinitis were given either 1,000 or 2,000mg daily of spirulina or placebo, and after 12 weeks, PBMCs were isolated and compared to baseline. Spirulina proved ineffective at modulating the secretion of Th1 cytokines (IFN-gamma and IL-2), but when administered at 2,000mg daily, it significantly reduced IL-4 levels by 32 percent from PHA-stimulated cells. Further studies need to be done to determine whether the results are dose-dependent.

Spirulina is a form of blue-green algae that is often used as a dietary supplement because it is a rich source of nutrients, containing up to 70 percent protein, B-complex vitamins, phycocyanin, chlorophyll, beta-carotene, vitamin E, and numerous minerals. In fact, spirulina contains more beta-carotene than carrots. It has been tested in scientific studies for cholesterol, diabetes, cancer, weight loss and malnutrition. Although reliable positive human clinical evidence is lacking to recommend spirulina for any condition. For more information on spirulina, please visit [Natural Standard's Herbs & Supplements Database](#).

References: 1) Mao TK, Van de Water J, Gershwin ME. Effects of a Spirulina-based dietary supplement on cytokine production from allergic rhinitis patients. *J Med Food*. 2005 Spring;8(1):27-30. [View Abstract](#).

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Lecture Teleconference

The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center's Integrative Medicine Program is now offering the opportunity to have their Integrative Medicine Program Lecture Series teleconferenced to other institutions. The series takes place each third Thursday of the month (except December and August) from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Central Standard Time.



National and international speakers are carefully screened and recruited to present evidence-based research on CAM with a focus on cancer. To view a sample of the lectures go to: <http://www.mdanderson.org/cimer> and click on videos, then click on: Food & Nutrition in the Prevention & Treatment of Cancer: A Personal & Professional Odyssey by Lawrence H Kushi, ScD, Associate Director for Etiology and Prevention Research, Division of Research, Kaiser Permanente or Integrative Medicine: Can It Be Legally Defensible, Ethically Appropriate and Clinically Responsible? by Michael H Cohen, JD, MBA, MFA, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Director of Legal Programs at Harvard Medical School Osher Institute.

A calendar of upcoming lectures can be viewed by clicking on Educational Programs & Events and then Integrative Medicine Program Lecture Series. Current participants include, The University of Texas Medical School - Houston, The University of Texas Medical Branch - Galveston, and Baylor College of Medicine. The series is interactive, allowing for questions at the end of the lecture. For more information on how to obtain this educational forum, please contact: Cathy Kirkwood, MPH, Manager, Integrative Medicine Program – Education, 713-745-3138, or e-mail cdkirkwood@mdanderson.org.

M. D. Anderson Cancer Center's Integrative Medicine Program is also looking for a Tenure-Track Clinical Faculty Member and a Postdoctoral Fellow. Interested individuals should submit C.V. and a brief synopsis of experience and interest to: Lorenzo Cohen, PhD Associate Professor and Chief, Section of Integrative Medicine, The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, 1515 Holcombe Boulevard, Box 145, Houston, Texas 77030.

Integrative Medicine for Health Care Organizations Conference



Health Forum® will be holding its fourth annual conference on Integrative Medicine for Health Care Organizations at the Omni San Diego Hotel in San Diego, California from February 16-18, 2006. The session will focus on strategies on the implementation of CAM programs in hospital settings. Pre-conference programs on February 16th include workshops and a site visit to the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine in La Jolla.

For more information call 1.800.242.4890 or [click here](#) to download the registration form.

If you would like us to post your event(s) online, please e-mail: news@naturalstandard.com.

Consumerlab.com Reviews Memory Enhancement Supplements

Many herbs and supplements are believed to improve cognitive function and memory, including *Ginkgo biloba*, huperzine A, phosphatidylserine (PS), and acetyl-L-carnitine. Consumerlab.com recently reviewed supplements containing these ingredients to verify that the quality and amounts of each were accurate according to the labels.



Ginkgo biloba extract (GBE), is often used to increase cognitive functions in

elderly people, delay the progression of Alzheimer's disease, increase blood flow to the legs and treat tinnitus, depression and asthma. In most clinical trials ginkgo contains two major groups of phytochemicals called flavonol glycosides and terpene lactones. The extracts shown to work in clinical trials have contained at least 5 percent terpene lactones and at least 22 percent flavonol glycosides. GBE products now claim to be "standardized" to these amounts.

Consumer.lab.com's review of GBE products in 1999 found that nearly one quarter of the 30 brands tested did not have the expected levels, and tests in 2003 found that seven of nine ginkgo products lacked adequate levels of these compounds. In this trial only six of 13 products selected for testing passed, and many contained high levels of lead or poor ingredient quality.

Studies of huperzine A have shown the compound to improve memory, cognition, and behavioral function in people with Alzheimer's disease, multi-infarct dementia, and senile dementia due to its actions on acetylcholine.

Phosphatidylserine is believed to enhance mental function in youth and slow decline of mental function in the elderly. All three phosphatidylserine compounds contained advertised amounts of PS.

Acetyl-L-carnitine's effect on Alzheimer's disease has been illustrated in early studies, but large scale studies have yet to validate those results. All products that were entered in the Voluntary Certification Program passed testing.

To read the report, [click here](#).

Tea May Reduce Ovarian Cancer Risk



A new study from the [Archives of Internal Medicine](#) suggests that tea consumption is associated with a reduced risk of epithelial ovarian cancer.

More than 61,000 women between 40-76 years old were questioned about their eating habits at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden from 1987-1990. Reports of cancer were followed up until 2005. Three hundred and one women developed ovarian cancer during the study. Researchers found that tea consumption was inversely associated with the risk of ovarian cancer; women who consumed tea less than once a day were 18 percent less likely to develop ovarian cancer. Drinking one cup per day was associated with a 24 percent lower risk, and two cups a day equaled a 46 percent lower risk. This study did not discern the benefits from drinking different types of tea. Further studies need to be done to ascertain the reason for the benefits and to determine whether tea alone is related to this lowered risk and if specific teas are more effective than others.

References: 1) Larsson SC; Wolk A Tea Consumption and Ovarian Cancer Risk in a Population-Based Cohort Arch Intern Med; Dec 12, 2005; 165:2683-2686 [View Abstract](#).

The Power and Promise of Qi Seminar

The Power and Promise of Qi: Ancient Healing and Longevity Secrets of Chinese Physicians, Monks, and Warriors for Personal Maximization lead by Roger Jahnke, one of the first Americans to become a doctor of Chinese medicine, will lead sessions to the heart of China's tradition of self-healing and reveal the empowerment secrets of the vital life energy known as



Qi.

Sessions will take place at The Crossings in Austin, Texas from February 5-10, 2006. Tuition: \$325, which does not include accommodation. Attendees will learn how to cultivate and manipulate Qi energy.

For more information, please visit <http://www.thecrossingsaustin.com/workshops>.

If you would like us to post your event(s) online, please e-mail: news@naturalstandard.com.

Health Freedom Protection Act May Help Supplement Manufacturers



The Health Freedom Protection Act (H.R. 4282) supported by U.S. Reps. Chris Cannon, R-Utah, and Rob Bishop, R-Utah, has the potential to boost supplement sales and end US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) intervention in labeling.

If passed, the bill would allow supplement companies to link their products to scientifically proven medical benefits. This would allow manufacturers of omega-3 fatty acids to associate their products with a lower rate of heart disease. Similarly, manufacturers of folic acid could state a lower rate of neural tube defects at birth.

Manufacturers and some state representatives feel the FDA oversteps its bounds by censoring these claims on all supplements. The FDA regulations are in place to protect consumers from fraudulent claims, but supporters of this bill argue that those rulings are too stringent and keep manufacturers from publishing validated claims. The bill would still allow the government to prosecute those who made false claims but that statement would have to be conclusively proven false. Although without full regulation and testing by the FDA it is not possible to know whether products even contain the ingredients they claim to.

Currently supplements are regulated under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (passed in 1994), which allows the public have access to scientific articles and publications on the role of nutrients in disease.

Maitake Supplements May Boost Immune Response



Beta glucans from maitake mushrooms may stimulate immune defense systems, reports a new study published in the [*Journal of American Nutraceutical Association*](#).

Maitake mushrooms, *Grifola frondosa*, are a prime source of (1-3)- β -D-glucans. Researchers tested two of these extracts from MaitakeGold 404 (MTG) and Grifon-Pro Maitake D Fraction (MDF) and compared them to lentinan. Lentinan is a well-researched mushroom-extracted glucan. The immunological factors tested included phagocytosis, natural killer (NK) cell activity, expression of cell surface markers, cytokine secretion and apoptosis. Results proved the two glucans had similar actions to lentinan, and in some cases had better responses obtained from lower doses. Further human trials must be done to validate these results.

References: 1) Vetvicka V, Vetvickova, J Immunostimulating Properties of Two Different Beta-

Glucans Isolated from Maitake Mushrooms (Grifola frondosa) JANA, Volume 8, No. 3, 2005 [View Abstract](#)

Inside Natural Standard



Natural Standard has just completed specialized content for the Medline database for the National Library of Medicine and National Institute of Health as well as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Natural Standard founder Dr. Catherine Ulbricht will be teaching three classes at Northeastern University in the Clinical Trial Design and Project Management graduate certificate program. She will be teaching Validation and Auditing of Clinical Trial Information (BT3211), Clinical Drug Development Data Analysis: Concepts and Applications (PMC3212) and Clinical Trial Design Optimization and Problem Solving (BT3213). The Graduate Certificate in Clinical Trial Design program will focus on the use of new computerized model systems that integrate dynamic drug disease models, strategic market models, and financial models. A total of 16 quarter hours are needed to receive the certificate.

Natural Standard would like to welcome to the Senior Editorial Board Ionela O. Hubbard, LAc., MAOM, QME assistant professor at the Loma Linda University School of Medicine, David Shannahoff-Khalsa CDN, RH (AHG) at Bastyr University, John S. Markowitz, PharmD an associate professor at University of South Carolina, Vasant Lad, M.A.Sc. the Executive Director at the Ayurvedic Institute, Sonia Elisa Masocco, faculty at the Ayurvedic Institute and Wynn Werner the administrator of the Ayurvedic Institute.

Natural Standard would also like to welcome two students from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy to clinical rotations. We encourage students of all disciplines to apply for our local and virtual rotations.

Anyone interested in being listed in **Natural Standard's** new practitioner database should contact news@naturalstandard.com to learn how to be listed.

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