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Dear Friends,

Paging through a copy of Discover Magazine from 2005, I noted with curiosity an article on the use of high-dose vitamin therapy for the treatment of mental disorders, from psychosis to attention deficit-hyperactivity to manic-depressive disorders. The article started out with the story of a farmer who had found that aggressive pigs could be calmed down with extra vitamins and minerals in their feed. A friend had children with mental problems, and when they gave the angry, aggressive son some supplements all his symptoms disappeared within a month.

Next, they treated the psychotic daughter with the same formula and found that she was much better within days, and her symptoms were almost completely gone in a week. Nine years later both children were symptom free. Another researcher found that prisoners' behavior improved when they were given supplements, and his research was repeated in England in a placebo-controlled study with vitamins, minerals, fish oil and GLA from evening primrose oil. The results were impressive, with the prisoners in the active treatment group showing 35 percent fewer anti-social acts than those on the placebo, an unprecedented reduction.

With such results to point to and two remarkable cases of her own, a research psychologist approached a Harvard researcher at McLean Hospital, renowned for treatment of mental disorders. While skeptical, he gave the sample he had been given to a colleague's son with bipolar disorder. The boy improved dramatically within days, and then the boy's sister had similarly dramatic results. After further successful experience with bipolar patients he published his findings, realizing that he was putting his "career on the line."

These two researchers were vilified by antagonists to nutritional therapy. Unfortunately, this threat to their careers was enough to lead them to stop referring to their experiences with supplements in the treatment of mental disorders. They also stopped receiving government grants for their research. It is disturbing that even qualified and skeptical researchers who see the benefits of supplements are unable to pursue their observations without interference from the forces of the status quo.

I have been using such therapies successfully since 1976. They have been reported since the early 1950's by such luminaries as Abram Hoffer, MD, and later by Linus Pauling, PhD. My first dramatic experience was with a young woman who had been a top high-school student until a psychotic breakdown as a senior. She was ill for nine years in spite of numerous treatments and came to me as a last resort. After three weeks on diet and vitamins, she started to feel better, and within three months was almost back to normal. She went back to school, became a nurse, and never again needed medications. What is curious to me is that what I have been doing for thirty years is just being "discovered" by Discover Magazine — just about fifty years late.

Nutrition Science Updates

A diet high in refined grains, such as white flour, particularly white bread, increases the risk of kidney cancer. Italian researchers compared the diets of 767 patients with renal cell carcinoma (RCC) in the two years before their diagnosis with the diets of 1534 controls at the same hospital with non-cancer diagnoses. They used a food-frequency questionnaire to evaluate diets.

Their evaluation showed that white bread increased the risk of RCC by 94 percent, white rice increased it by 29 percent, and milk and yogurt increase the risk by 27 percent. Vegetables lowered the risk by 35 percent. (Surprisingly, chicken and processed meats also lowered risk, but there was no clear explanation of this finding.)

The same researchers earlier showed that refined grains were associated with an increased risk of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). In a study of 1369 patients with BPH compared to 1451 controls, they found that subjects with the highest intake of refined grains had a 50 percent greater risk of BPH than those with the lowest intake. On the contrary, subjects with the highest intake of polyunsaturated fatty acids had a 28 percent reduction of risk of BPH than those with the lowest intake. In this study, the researchers found that both omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids provided similar benefits.

Research on 77,000 women in the Nurses' Health Study shows that increasing fruit and vegetable consumption reduces the risk of developing gallstones. Gallstones form when substances in bile precipitate and condense into a hard mass, and these can be painful when passing through the bile ducts, or even life-threatening. Gallstones may require surgery or ultra-sonic destruction.

A diet rich in citrus fruits, leafy greens, and other foods rich in vitamin C can reduce the likelihood that patients will require gall-bladder surgery. Those with the highest levels of consumption had a 21 percent lower risk of needing surgery than those women with the lowest intake of fruits and vegetables. Antioxidant vitamins, fiber, and minerals such as magnesium might all be contributors to the benefits observed in this study.

Eating lots of fruit is also helpful for men. A new study shows that men who eat large amounts of vitamin C-rich fruits (particularly citrus) have a reduced risk of pre-malignant lesions in the mouth. In the large Health Professionals' Follow-up Study of 42,311 men, those who consumed the most fruits had a 30-40 percent lower risk of such lesions, many of which become squamous cell cancers. The benefit was even seen in smokers.

A study of 3718 subjects over 65 years old shows that eating at least two servings of leafy green vegetables per day boosts cognitive function, reducing the decline seen with aging by 40 percent. Researchers measured immediate and delayed memory and a "symbol digit" test that measures speed of thinking, rapid decision making, and mental flexibility. The subjects were evaluated at baseline and at three and six years. The most effective vegetables were lettuce, salad, spinach, kale, and collards. These vegetables contain many nutrients, including vitamin E, which has previously been shown to improve cognitive function.

Supplement Science Updates

Heart failure is a reduction in the pumping capacity of the heart muscle leading to accumulation of fluids in the lungs and/or legs, shortness of breath, and fatigue. A new study shows that omega-3 oil supplements improve heart function in patients with heart failure, even if they are already on a full dose of typical medications.

In this study of 25 heart-failure patients, 15 were given 2 gms of a polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA) supplement with 85 percent omega-3 oils (EPA and DHA) and 10 were given a placebo. They evaluated the patients after four months. Subjects on the PUFA supplements had improvement in heart rate, heart rate variability, and cardiac response to blood pressure changes, all indicators of better heart function, and such improvements are associated with better prognoses.

Coenzyme Q10 improves cardiac function in patients with heart failure. A controlled study of 23 patients given CoQ10 with and without exercise, or exercise alone showed that oxygen use improved by 10 percent and arterial relaxation improved by 38 percent in the supplement group,

and the effects were enhanced by exercise. CoQ10 also improved the heart muscle contraction ability, which is reduced in heart failure. Subjects received supplements of 300 mg daily, or placebo.

Asthma patients (13 males and 28 females) were treated with the usual drugs or the drugs plus supplements of coenzyme Q10 (120 mg), vitamin E (400 IU), and vitamin C (250 mg). Those treated with the supplements had significant improvement and were able to reduce their medication doses. These were patients needing steroids for the management of their symptoms, so a lower dose can help reduce long-term side effects.

In laboratory studies, the flavonoids quercetin and EGCG (from green tea) were found to protect retinal cells from oxidative stress. Researchers stressed the cells with oxidants, such as hydrogen peroxide. Treatment with the flavonoids blocked production of oxidative by-products (reactive oxygen species), reduced cell death, and induced the production of detoxifying enzymes. Pre-treatment was 80-100 percent effective in reducing oxidative cell death. Some benefits were seen even if the flavonoids were added after exposure to the oxidative stress. Protecting the retinal cells is important in the prevention of age-related macular degeneration as well as visual deterioration associated with diabetes.

Ask Dr. J

Q. You stress the importance of whole grains, and many conventional baked goods and cereals are now available with whole grains. Do you recommend these products for their health benefits?

DS, New Hampshire, via email.

A. Whole grains, including brown rice, oatmeal, millet, barley, whole wheat, and whole corn, are an important part of a healthy diet. They are easy to prepare from the grains themselves, but if you do not have the time, you can safely buy a variety of foods that are made with whole grains. Unfortunately, many available products that say they contain whole grains are not really whole grain!

Labels may be misleading. Products may say “contains whole grains” but most of the grain is refined or white flour, and the company includes a small amount of whole grain to justify the label.

Other products may contain significant amounts of whole grain, but also contain large amounts of sugar and other highly processed ingredients that reduce or even negate its value. Unless the word “whole”, appears before “durum” or plain “wheat”, they are refined flours.

Look for products that are 100 percent whole grain, preferably organic, with no sugar, margarine, shortening, or processed oils (commercial vegetable oil), and no chemical preservatives or conditioners. If they contain ingredients that you do not recognize, it’s best to avoid them. Large food processors now make many of their regular products with some whole grains, but nonetheless they are not always healthful.

It is often easier to find whole grains at health food stores than in conventional markets. Unfortunately, most health food stores now carry many products made with refined grains, such as white flour, and white rice, and lots of refined sugar. As a result, you have to be careful and read labels wherever you shop.

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“Discovering” Vitamins

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In the Health News

- Obesity worsens the outcome in women with ovarian cancer. A study of 216 patients showed that being overweight or obese led to a shorter time to tumor recurrence and a shorter overall survival time. In addition, the obese women were more likely to have diabetes and hypertension, but these were independent factors that did not appear to influence the behavior of the cancer. (Pavelka JC, et al., Effect of obesity on survival in epithelial ovarian cancer. *Cancer*. 2006 Oct 1;107(7):1520-4.)
- Exercise intensity matters in improving overall fitness. Walking at any pace for 10,000 steps per day, using a pedometer as a guide and motivator, improves aerobic capacity and blood pressure by about 4 percent, but an aerobic fitness program using a stationary bicycle or treadmill does even better, improving aerobic capacity and reducing blood pressure by 10 percent each. In addition, the aerobic program was more effective in improving body weight, blood lipids, and blood sugar regulation. The walkers chose their own pace, so many of them appeared to go too slowly to achieve the most benefits of exercise. Reuters interviewed Canadian researcher Vicki Harber about her study. (To get more out of walking, pick up the pace. Reuters Health, October 12, 2006.)

Diet and Disease

- Whole grains are known to reduce diabetes risk, and a new study of 41,186 black women, who are more likely to get diabetes than whites, shows that high magnesium and whole grain intake led to a 31 percent lower risk of diabetes; after adjustment for other healthy habits, including eating less red meat and saturated fat, the benefits of whole grains were the same. (van Dam RM, et al., Dietary calcium and magnesium, major food sources, and risk of type 2 diabetes in U.S. black women. *Diabetes Care*. 2006 Oct;29(10):2238-43.)

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No Time to Cook?

No matter how many quick recipes I have, sometimes the time available for cooking is too limited even for them (such as preparing to move to Florida for the winter while still remodeling our New Hampshire home). At those times, I make it really simple, such as a baked potato with steamed broccoli, and a can of sardines or poached eggs (with a sprinkle of curry). I also heat leftover brown rice (a rice cooker is an invaluable time saver) with defrosted, frozen organic vegetables and tofu cubes garnished with soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, and freshly ground pepper or cayenne. Lately I baked a butternut squash and two acorn squashes (cut in half lengthwise) until the juices started to brown and the flesh was tender. I served these with a sprinkle of cinnamon. Whole grain bread with hummus, or with organic peanut butter and a mashed banana are nutritious and healthy.

From November to May, and occasionally during the summer, I see patients in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. For appointments, call **386-409-7747**. I also do **phone consults** from both locations.

From June to October, I see patients in Arlington, MA, and Amherst, NH. Call **603-878-2256**.

My newest book is *The User's Guide to Heart Healthy Supplements*. Dr. Janson's *New Vitamin Revolution* and my other books are also available at my website, from QCI Nutritionals, or health food stores. You can visit the QCI Nutritionals website at **www.qcinutritionals.com** for quality supplements at reasonable prices.

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