

Welcome to October,

This month we are looking at research done around Glucosamine, Chondroitin, MSM as well as information on antioxidant supplements. I hope you find this to be helpful with decisions or questions you have about these. I found the antioxidant article especially interesting.

Before the research, let me thank the Triathlon team – we had Carl Lukens swimming, I bicycled and Elektra Fisher ran. We each did a personal record on what we ‘expected’ ourselves to do and that is outstanding. I believe that you can’t ask for anything more than that. Carl and Elektra are both thinking of doing the whole enchilada alone next year. I want to mention that Elektra had never competed before and she was quite surprised at the positive energy she felt around the event.

I would like to also acknowledge our swimmer from last year, Brad Eastburn. He was there this year doing the whole enchilada on his own and he had a great time. Congrats Brad. When partaking in the triathlon as a team member, you don’t have to do the whole triathlon yourself the next year. That decision comes totally from you and where you are when the next year’s triathlon comes about. Thank you clients and students for going that extra step to challenge yourself.

I have been having fun looking at books about the brain. Did you know that physical exercise protects and enhances your brain? I read that it is perhaps the single most important thing you can do to keep your neurons healthy over time. More on this hopefully next month. Now enjoy the research information below.

Nutrition Action, Sept 2006, did an article on Glucosamine and Chondroitin. The article looked at the GAIT research on these two popular supplements. This research came about because researchers worried that earlier studies had flaws that made glucosamine and chondroitin look more effective than they really are. From the GAIT research, they found a lot more confusion around these supplements. Instead of summarizing the full article, here is The Bottom Line report:

- ? Glucosamine alone and chondroitin alone don’t relieve pain from osteoarthritis of the knee any better than a placebo.
- ? The combination of glucosamine and chondroitin doesn’t help people with mild arthritis pain.
- ? Glucosamine plus chondroitin seems to help people with moderate to severe arthritis pain, but those results may have been due to change.
- ? There’s no evidence that taking glucosamine and/or chondroitin is harmful.

After this article, NA looked at MSM (Methylsulfonylmethane) and found no research with humans, animals or test tubes to back up the claim that “MSM plays a critical role in the elasticity and flexibility of the connective tissues of your joints.” This was quoted on a package from Nature Made Triple Flex. NA did note that two published studies have tested MSM on people with arthritis and both studies were funded by MSM manufactures. Fancy that!

After MSM, Isoflavones were looked at. Here they found only one study that tested isoflavones on cartilage in either human or animals. It came up empty.

Possibly you take these supplements and if they are working for you, great. I tested these supplements and I encourage you to test them also. I took the supplements for 4 months and

then stopped taking them. Personally, I did not notice any differences when I stopped taking them, so I assumed they weren't doing anything for me. Check it out and see for yourself. If you find a different result, keep taking them.

In the July/August 2006 ACSM's Health and Fitness Newsletter, David C. Nieman, Dr.PH, FACSM answered the question:

*"Every time I walk into a health food store or open a fitness magazine, I see advertisements for antioxidants. These ads claim that I need to ingest antioxidant supplements, if I exercise to counter the damaging effects of "free oxygen radicals." Is this true?"*

Dr. Nieman states "In fact, exercise training is so effective as an antioxidant therapy that it helps counter the negative effects of oxidative stress on aging and heart disease."

He ends his article with:

"In general, the best strategy to promote health and fitness is to be physically active and consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day, and six or more servings of whole grains. Count on your exercise program to build your antioxidant defense system. Antioxidant supplements beyond a healthy diet are not needed. Fruits and vegetables are complex foods containing more than 100 beneficial vitamins, minerals, fiber and other substances, and no pill has captured their protective effects. One of the strongest findings from science in the past decade is that the fittest and healthiest people on earth are physically active and have diets emphasizing colorful fruits and vegetables, and whole grains."

Are you taking antioxidants because of the ads you see? Do you really need them? According to Dr. Nieman you don't.

I know it is tough to know what to take and what not to take. Each week we see and/or hear another research telling us something different. When you hear that X is a good thing to take because it does yyy, check to see who did the research. If the research was done by the X company, don't believe them. If the research is from a reputable organization, check it out for yourself and see how it works for you. Only within yourself can you find the real answer to the puzzling questions out there. Good luck.

I recently read an interesting article called "Men's Health Checking Under the Hood" in the Nutrition Action Health Letter. It talks about Cholesterol, Prostrate Cancer, Blood Sugar, Exercise, Colorectal Cancer, Waist Measurements and Depression. If you are interested in this for yourself or a man you know, let me know and we will find a way to get it to you.

There will be a Calorie Overkill quiz coming your way in the near future. Staytuned.

Carol Lee