

The Natural Pharmacy Newsletter

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In The News

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The Latest Weight Loss Craze-Raspberry Ketone

Raspberry ketone is a major aromatic compound contained in raspberries. The chemical structure is similar to capsaicin and synephrine. In ANIMAL studies ingesting raspberry ketone along with a high fat diet significantly reduced weight gain, visceral fatty tissue, and liver triglyceride content. It is thought that raspberry ketone might increase fat metabolism and reduce obesity by increasing thermogenesis and decreasing fat cells. Studies also suggest that raspberry ketone might decrease secretion of adiponectin which is involved in fat and glucose metabolism. Raspberry ketone may also be beneficial in the treatment and prevention of cancer because of its effects on androgen receptors. It may also be beneficial in hair growth and skin elasticity. 90% is eliminated from the body via the urine in 24 hours.

Dr. Oz calls it the “miracle fat burner in a bottle” but is it safe? It’s certainly a hot item these days and everyone seems to be requesting it. Because it is chemically similar to synephrine, raspberry ketone may cause stimulant-like side effects. Shakiness and possible heart palpitations may occur. Raspberry ketone may also interact with warfarin (Coumadin) increasing INR necessitating an increased dose. Since there have been few if any studies on raspberry ketone, being aware of potential side effects and interactions prior to using this product is important.

www.naturaldatabase.therapeuticresearch.com/nd/PrintVersion.aspx?cs=&s=ND

Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA) Studied for Weight Management

CLA is a naturally occurring polyunsaturated fatty acid that comes from linoleic acid. Our major dietary source of CLA is dairy and beef. A recently published article (*Nutrition*, January 2012) studied 63 patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 24-35 taking 1.7 grams of CLA or a placebo twice a day for 12 weeks. The patients were evaluated for body composition including weight, BMI, total fat mass, below the skin fat mass (subcutaneous), waist-to-hip ratio both at the beginning of the study and after 12 weeks. Patients were also evaluated for total cholesterol, triacylglycerol, LDL, and HDL. The researchers found that body weight, BMI, total fat mass, fat percentage, subcutaneous fat mass, and hip-to-waist ratio decreased in the CLA group after 12 weeks when compared to a placebo. Female patients with a BMI >27 and supplementing with CLA also had a reduction in body weight, BMI and waist-to-hip ratio. There were no significant changes in blood lipids.

CLA has also been studied colorectal cancer. One study observed a 39% reduced risk of this type of cancer. Preliminary evidence also suggests that CLA may reduce the risk of breast cancer and may actually kill breast cancer cells. CLA appears to enhance

immune function and may inhibit certain pathways required for tumor growth.

Adverse effects with CLA are minimal and consist of possible gastrointestinal upset including diarrhea, nausea, loose stool, and dyspepsia. For weight loss in patients 1.8 to 7 grams per day has been used.

Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database, 2010; www.cpmedical.net/articles/cla-studied-for-weight-management?utm_content=cla-st...

Can Increasing Protein Intake Help Blood Pressure Balance?

Since 33 percent of Americans over the age of 20 have elevated blood pressure (BP) and another 30 percent have an increased risk (CDC), it is important that we look at ways to control it to help prevent coronary artery disease. According to a recent Dutch study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* on February 22, 2012, protein intake can impact blood pressure.

The researchers looked at 94 overweight adults with BP values of 130/85 or greater but less than 160/10 that were not currently undergoing treatment. The patients received one of two treatments, a 20 gram protein supplement or a 20 gram carbohydrate supplement three times daily for four weeks.

After measuring office and daytime blood pressures, it was found that the protein group had a systolic BP that was 4.9 mmHg lower and a diastolic BP that was 2.7 mmHg lower than the carbohydrate group.

The researchers concluded that increased protein intake was more effective in lowering systolic and diastolic BP than increased carbohydrates. Another added benefit, in my opinion, is the stabilization of blood glucose levels with the addition of protein versus carbohydrates. This

leads to less carbohydrate cravings and eventually better weight control.

www.cpmedical.net/articles/increased-protein-intake-supports-blood-pressure-balance...

The Pleasurability of Scratching Itches

This falls into the category of "I'm not sure why we study this stuff" but it is quite interesting. A new study published in the *British Journal of Dermatology* on January 13, 2012 found that scratching an itch is a pleasurable experience. The study set out to determine topographical variations in itch intensity, the effectiveness of scratching to provide itch relief and the associated pleasurability at different body sites.

Researchers induced itch in 18 healthy subjects on the forearm, ankle, and back using cowhage spicules. You might ask "what are cowhage spicules?". They are the hairs of the pods of a leguminous plant, *Mucuna Pruriens*. The researchers then scratched the itch with a brush immediately following the itch induction. The patients reported the intensity of itch with and without scratching and the pleasurability of scratching and the pleasurability of scratching at 30 second intervals.

The researchers found that the itch intensity and pleasurability ratings at the ankle and back were significantly higher than on the forearm. The also showed that the greater the itch, the greater the reported pleasurability. They also showed that itch intensity was perceived more at the ankle as was continued pleasurability. Scratching an itch on the back had more effective relief than other areas tested.

Although not guaranteed, since this was a British study, our tax dollars were probably not used to conduct this study.

www.cpmedical.net/articles/researchers-study-the-pleasurability-of-scratching-itches..