Study Uncovers Green Tea’s Ability to Help Prevent Alzheimer Disease

By Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, September 22, 2005, abstracted from “Green Tea Epigallocatechin-3-Gallate (EGCG) Modulates Amyloid Precursor Protein Cleavage and Reduces Cerebral Amyloidosis in Alzheimer Transgenic Mice” in the September 21, 2005 issue of the Journal of Neuroscience.

Link – http://www.nowfoods.com/HealthLibrary/HealthArticles/WeeklyNewsletter/M074222.htm

The number of Americans with Alzheimer Disease (AD) has more than doubled since 1980. It now stands at over 4.5 million Americans, and is expected to hit 16 million by 2050.1 National direct and indirect annual costs of caring for individuals with AD now exceed $100 billion.2

Fortunately, research has uncovered a number of ways to help prevent AD. Increasing your intake of wine3 and apples,4 increasing your HDL cholesterol,5 supplementing your diet with vitamin E6 and grape seed extract7 and exercising to increase your bone mineral density8 are all ways to help protect you against AD.

Now a new study9 has found another way to help prevent AD: drinking green tea.

When it comes to healthy foods and nutritional supplements, perhaps none has received more favorable press than green tea.10 It has been suggested that the antioxidants in green tea called catechins11 are responsible for green tea’s ability to help prevent cancers of the stomach,12 lung,13 prostate14 and ovary.15 Green tea has also been a proposed treatment to help prevent kidney failure in diabetics16 and even to help increase exercise endurance.17

In the study, researchers gave daily injections of EGCG, the primary catechin in green tea, in amounts of 20 mg per kg of bodyweight for two months to a group of five mice that were specially bred to be prone to developing AD. The researchers injected five more of the AD-prone mice with a control substance.

Researchers found as much as a 54% reduced the buildup of beta-amyloid plaque in the EGCG-treated mice. It is this beta-amyloid plaque that causes the brain damage that is the hallmark of AD.18

For the researchers, this study “raises the possibility that [green tea] dietary supplementation may provide effective (prevention against) AD.”

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Reference:

1 Hebert, LE; Scherr, PA; Bienias, JL; Bennett, DA; Evans, DA. “Alzheimer Disease in the U.S. Population: Prevalence Estimates Using the 2000 Census.” Archives of Neurology August 2003; 60 (8): 1119 – 1122


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9 Tan J. Green Tea Epigallocatechin-3-Gallate (EGCG) Modulates Amyloid Precursor Protein Cleavage and Reduces Cerebral Amyloidosis in Alzheimer Transgenic Mice *J. Neurosci.* 2005 25: 8807-8814


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