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**The Telangana Science Journal**

Health and Nutrition

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**Omega-3 Oils**

Metabolic syndrome refers to a collection of risk factors for diabetes, heart disease and stroke -- including abdominal obesity, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides. The syndrome is typically diagnosed when a person has three or more of those traits, and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, a major study, found that it can double the risk of heart attack and stroke. Clinical trials have shown that omega-3s can lower triglycerides (a type of blood fat), and a

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prescription medication containing the fats -- sold as Lovaza -- is sometimes used to treat very high triglyceride levels.

Research has also suggested that omega-3 oil supplements can help lower blood pressure and may reduce the risk of death among people with established heart disease, according to the National Institutes of Health. A new study of 3,500 Korean adults, ages 40 to 69, found that men who had a serving of omega-3 oil each day were 57 percent less likely than those who had omega-3 oil less than once per week to develop metabolic syndrome over three years. There was no such association seen among women, however. The reason for the gender discrepancy is not clear. Men in the top 10 percent for omega-3 intake typically got 786 milligrams (mg) per day, while their female counterparts got 563 mg. Men in that top omega-3 group also showed a lower risk of metabolic syndrome than those in the bottom 10 percent -- which supports the theory that it is the fats that explain the connection between omega-3 oil and the risk of metabolic syndrome.

However, even if taking omega-3 oils regularly does help reduce the risk of metabolic syndrome or its components, it would be only one of many factors involved. A healthy weight, not smoking, regular exercise, and a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, high-fiber foods and "good" unsaturated fats are all considered important. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, July 2010.

Omega-3 oils are present in seeds like flax ([http://www.vedah.net/TSJ/January2006.html#Omega-3\\_Fats](http://www.vedah.net/TSJ/January2006.html#Omega-3_Fats)), nuts like walnuts, leaves like purslane (<http://www.vepachedu.com/tsjNovember2004.html>), lentils like blackgram (urad dal [http://www.vepachedu.org/TSJ/August2003.html#What\\_if\\_You\\_Dont\\_Eat\\_Fish](http://www.vepachedu.org/TSJ/August2003.html#What_if_You_Dont_Eat_Fish)).

### **Vitamins D & E**

Two new studies help clarify the role that certain vitamins may play in the onset of cognitive decline, including risk of Alzheimer's disease. One study suggests that low blood levels of vitamin D may increase risk for cognitive decline, while another study shows that consuming a diet rich in the antioxidant powerhouse vitamin E may help reduce the risk for dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. But experts, including the study researchers, caution that it is still too early to make any blanket recommendations about what individuals should eat and what supplements they should take to reduce their risks for age-related cognitive decline and dementia. [http://www.webmd.com/brain/news/20100712/vitamins-d-and-e-may-affect-dementia-risk?src=RSS\\_PUBLIC](http://www.webmd.com/brain/news/20100712/vitamins-d-and-e-may-affect-dementia-risk?src=RSS_PUBLIC)

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### **Green Tea**

Green tea extract has shown promise as cancer prevention agent for oral cancer in patients with a pre-malignant condition known as oral leukoplakia. A study, published online in *Cancer Prevention Research*, is the first to examine green tea as a chemopreventative agent in this high-risk patient population. The researchers found that more than half of the oral leukoplakia patients who took the extract had a clinical response.

Long investigated in laboratory, epidemiological and clinical settings for several cancer types, green tea is rich in polyphenols, which have been known to inhibit carcinogenesis in preclinical models. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 35,720 are expected to be diagnosed with oral and/or pharynx cancer and the five year survival rate is less than 50 percent.

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### **Sitting Kills You**

It turns out that people who spend more time sitting during their leisure time have an increased risk of death, regardless of daily exercise. American Cancer Society researchers tracked the activity levels and death rates in more than 123,000 healthy men and women for 13 years. They found women who spend over six hours a day sitting during leisure time (watching TV, playing games, surfing the web, reading) were 40 percent more likely to die sooner than women who spend less than three hours sitting. Men who spend more time sitting have a 20 percent increased risk of death. Essentially, those who sit less, live a longer life than those who don't. Several factors come into play when figuring out "why" sitting may take years off your life.

The first may seem like common sense. The more time you spend sitting, the more likely you are to passively eat snacks or consume high calories drinks resulting in unhealthy weight gain. But this isn't always the case. Sedentary obese and normal weight Americans had similar increased risk of death in the study. Prolonged time sitting suppresses your immune system, which may increase the risk of cancer and other diseases. And your blood isn't circulating as it should when you're sedentary for long periods of time. When blood doesn't flow thru your veins up to your heart, it could lead to dangerous blood clot. It also has metabolic consequences – increasing your resting blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

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Researchers say the metabolic effect may explain why the association was strongest for cardiovascular disease mortality in the study. The study is published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

### **Your Bones May Hold the Key**

Bone is a multitasker having mechanical, hematopoietic (blood-producing) and metabolic functions. It also acts as an endocrine organ through the release of osteocalcin hormone, which favors glucose metabolism when in its active form. In fact, the idea that the skeleton is much more than a reservoir for calcium and phosphate isn't entirely new. Earlier evidence had shown links between bone and the fat hormone leptin. (Obese adults are significantly less likely to develop osteoporosis.) The remodeling of bone relies on two cell types, bone-building osteoblasts and bone-resorbing osteoclasts, making bone the only organ with a cell type that is entirely focused on destroying host tissue.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/07/100722132334.htm>

### **Acupuncture**

Adenosine is one of the body's natural painkillers, which also helps to regulate sleep and has anti-inflammatory properties. When activated after an injury, the chemical blocks nerve signals to reduce pain, but the scientists found that adenosine also caused a reaction in deeper tissues treated by acupuncture. Despite acupuncture's 4,000-year history, little is known about the biological pathways that enable carefully placed needles to relieve pain in many patients.

The reaction to acupuncture in the mice showed 24 times the amount of adenosine near the insertion points versus those without any acupuncture treatment. The team then brought eastern and western science together by testing whether the cancer-treating medication deoxycoformycin, which helps sustain the level of adenosine in the system, would increase the pain-relieving benefits. They found that the two treatments make a good combination, coming close to tripling the level of adenosine in tissue surrounding the needle and more than tripling the length of time without discomfort.

### **Vaginal Gel Fights HIV**

More people than ever -- 5.2 million -- are taking drugs to treat HIV and AIDS, the World Health Organization said. Maybe there is some help for women to prevent it. Scientists are hailing a new vaginal gel as a breakthrough in the fight against HIV infection. Use of the gel fails to cut a woman's risk of being

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infected from a sex partner at least half the time, a study released found. The gel contains the drug tenofovir. This drug also is used to treat AIDS, the disease caused by HIV. After one year, the HIV infection rate in those who got the real drug was about 50%, compared with women who got the placebo. After 2½ years, the rate of infection was reduced by 39%. The journal Science published the results online.

The White House announced a new strategy for fighting HIV and AIDS infections. The program aims to reduce rates of new infections by 25% in the next 5 years. Use of resources will focus on the populations with the highest risk of contracting the HIV virus. These include gay and African-American men and areas with high rates of the disease. One goal is to get more people into treatment quickly. Now, 65% get treatment within 3 months of diagnosis. The new goal is 85%. The new plan also will try to streamline and coordinate existing programs. Some advocates praised the plan, but others said it took too long to develop and has no new funding.

### **Tension Headache**

Tension headaches are becoming increasingly prevalent. University of Granada researchers have shown that a 30 minute massage is able to reduce tension headache symptoms. The standard treatment for tension headaches is to administer analgesics, but these only temporarily relieve the symptoms. The American Journal of Manipulative Physiological and Therapeutics.

### **Trick Yourself to Eat Less**

A study into weight loss has shown that the mind can be tricked into believing the stomach is full. The study focused on influencing the belief that the food about to be eaten will be more filling than it really was. The findings were presented to the Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior at their Annual Meeting.

Of course, it is not easy, and if you cannot trick yourself into healthy eating habits, don't worry. An experimental diet pill appears to be safe and effective, researchers reported. The new drug is lorcaserin, made by Arena Pharmaceuticals. It's one of three new diet drugs under review by U.S. drug officials in the next few months. In a study, more than 3,100 obese or overweight people were given either lorcaserin or placebo (fake) pills. After a year, nearly half of the lorcaserin group had lost at least 5% of their body weight. Only one-fifth of the placebo group lost that much. Many people from both groups dropped out.

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In the second year, half of the people taking lorcaserin were switched to placebo pills. About two-thirds of those who kept taking the drug kept their weight off. Only half of those who switched to placebo pills kept it off. Side effects were mild. There was no increase in heart valve problems. That was a problem with the diet drug fen-phen, which was withdrawn in 1997. Results appeared in the New England Journal of Medicine.

### Gallstones

About 30% of women and about 15% of men get gallstones which are literally small stones that form in the gall bladder, creating obstructions. About a third of diagnosed cases lead to complications or at least symptoms.

The University of East Anglia have released a report indicating that gallstones are reduced by exercise. The study clearly indicted that painful and possibly dangerous gallstones could be avoided simply by doing plenty of exercise. The European Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology published the study.

### Recipes

#### Chilled Mango Chipotle Soup

**Ingredients:** 2 mangoes; juice from 1 lime; 1/2 tsp ginger powder; dash salt and pepper, to taste; 1 tsp chipotle powder; 2 cups water or vegetable broth

**Preparation:** Puree all ingredients together in a blender or food processor until smooth and creamy. Add more spices to taste, and serve cold.

#### Cold Asian Rice Salad with Veggies

**Ingredients:** 4 cups cooked brown rice, chilled; 1/4 cup peanut oil; 1 tsp salt; 1/2 tsp pepper; 1 tsp sugar; 1 tsp sesame oil; 1 carrot, diced; 1/2 cup chopped snow peas; 1/2 cup corn kernels (optional); 1/4 cup rice vinegar; 1 stalk celery, diced; 1/2 red or yellow bell pepper, diced; 3 green onions, chopped; 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley.

**Preparation:** In a small mixing bowl, combine the peanut oil, salt, pepper, sugar and sesame oil. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then pour over the rice in a large mixing bowl. Toss gently to coat, then set aside.

#### Sloppy Joe Veggies

**Ingredients:** 1 tablespoon EVOO – Extra Virgin Olive Oil; 1 pound portabella mushroom caps, wiped clean and diced into small, bite-sized pieces; 1 medium onion, chopped; 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped or

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grated; 1 small red bell pepper, chopped; 2 tablespoons tomato paste; 3 tablespoons brown sugar; 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar, eyeball it; 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce; 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce; Salt and pepper 4 crusty rolls, split, toasted and lightly buttered; Sliced or chopped dill pickles, for garnish.

**Preparation:** Place a large skillet over medium-high heat with 1 turn of the pan of EVOO, about 1 tablespoon. Add the mushrooms to the pan and cook until golden brown, 7-8 minutes. Add the onion, garlic and bell pepper to the pan and season liberally with salt and pepper. Continue cooking until the veggies are tender, 5-6 minutes more. Add the tomato paste to the pan and cook 1 minute. In a small bowl, stir together the brown sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire and tomato sauce. Add the mixture to the skillet and simmer until thickened and saucy. Pile the Sloppy Veggie Joes onto toasted, buttered bun bottoms and top with pickles and bun tops. <http://www.rachaelrayshow.com/food/recipes/sloppy-joe-goes-veggie/>

### Coconut Curry

**Ingredients:** 1 onion, chopped; 3 cloves garlic; 1 tbsp fresh ginger; 1 green chili, seeded; 1 tbsp vegetable oil; ¼ tsp turmeric powder; ¼ tsp coriander; ¼ tsp cumin powder; ¼ tsp mustard powder; ½ cauliflower, chopped; 1 cup green beans; 1 carrot, sliced; 1 zucchini, sliced; 1 cup coconut milk; ½ tsp salt, or to taste.

**Preparation:** Process the onion, garlic, ginger and chili in a food processor until smooth. In a large skillet, heat the onion mixture and spices along with the oil and spices. Allow to cook for a minute or two, stirring frequently. Add the vegetables and the coconut milk and stir well. Season generously with 1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste. Cover and allow to cook for at least 20 minutes, or until veggies are tender.

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