

SCIENCE BRIEFS

NNFA Board of Directors

Executive Committee:

Pat Toomey, President
Toomey Natural Foods, Milford, OH

Mark Stowe, President-Elect
Nutrition Cottage, Delray Beach, FL

Don Haygood, Treasurer
Unique Life, Inc., Santa Clara, CA

Cheryl Dicks, Chair, Retail Council
Healthways Natural Foods, Hamilton, VA

Steve Brown, Supply Chair
Anabolic Laboratories, Inc., Irvine, CA

Board of Directors:

Paul Bennett
Harvest Moon Natural Foods, Olathe, KS

Judie Boothe
Fountain of Health, Inc., Amarillo, TX

Brian Craig
Craig Consulting, Inc., Provo, UT

Roger Derrough
Earth Fare, Asheville, NC

Hal Drexler
Country Life/Desert Essence/Long Life Tea,
Hauptauge, NY

Robert George
Dr.Soy.com, Irvine, CA

Jeff Haas
Spartan Health Foods, Las Vegas, NV

Abby Himmelein
Winding Way Farms, Indianapolis, IN

Harvey Kamil
NBTY, Inc. Long Island, NY

Robert A. Kay, Ph.D.
Leiner Health Products, Carson, CA

Phil Keller
House of Nutrition, San Jose, CA

James Lemsky
Hain Celestial Group, Irwindale, CA

Rhonda Miller
Health Foods Unlimited, Centerville, OH

Karl Riedel
Nature's Life, Garden Grove, CA

Pat Sardell
Country Vitamins, Corvallis, OR

Cynthia Tice
Natural Grocer, Inc. Philadelphia, PA

Chuck Verde
U.S. Mills, Inc., Needham, MA

Spirulina shown to Boost the Immune System

A recent study at University of California (UC) at Davis showed that spirulina, when added to cultured immune system cells, significantly increased cytokine production.

Researchers collected blood samples from 12 healthy volunteers and separated out the peripheral blood mononuclear cells. These cells include macrophages, monocytes and lymphocytes, including B and T cells. Working together, they mount an immune response. The cell cultures were incubated with dilutions of dried, powdered spirulina. The researchers added phytohemagglutinin, a known stimulator of lymphoid cells, to half the cultures to assess spirulina's effect on the immune system at rest and when stimulated to mount an allergic response.


After 72 hours, the researchers measured changes in cytokine levels and found that spirulina was a potent inducer of interferon-gamma and a stimulator of interleukin-4 and interleukin-1beta. "Together, increases of these cytokines suggests that spirulina is a strong proponent for protecting against intracellular pathogens and parasites and can potentially increase the expression of agents that stimulate inflammation, which also helps to protect the body against infections and potentially harmful micro-organisms," said Eric Gershwin, professor and chief of the division of rheumatology, allergy and clinical immunology at UC Davis. Although the finding is positive, additional studies on spirulina are needed to determine whether the immune boosting effects go beyond the lab.

Chromium Picolinate Shown to Be Beneficial in Elderly Diabetics

Combined with standard diabetes treatment, supplementation with chromium picolinate may significantly reduce blood glucose and lipid levels in elderly diabetic individuals, according to research findings reported at the meeting of the Gerontological Society of America.

Researchers in Israel studied the effects of chromium picolinate in 39 elderly patients with type II diabetes. The patients received 200 micrograms of chromium picolinate twice daily for three weeks in addition to the standard treatment for diabetes. The subjects were also placed on a low-sugar diet of approximately 1,500 calories per day.

After three weeks, researchers found that patients' fasting blood glucose levels dropped from an average of 189 to 150 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL). In addition, total cholesterol levels fell from 225.26 to 211.42 mg/dL and triglyceride levels fell from 152 to 136 mg/dL.

The study's authors conclude, "in this elderly diabetic population, dietary supplementation with chromium is beneficial in moderating glucose intolerance." 

Increases of cytokines suggests that spirulina is a strong proponent for protecting against intracellular pathogens and parasites

