

Studies on Blackcurrants and Women's Health

Title: Dietary Omega-3 fatty acids for women

Author: Jean-Marie Bourre

Study: This is a review of the specific needs of women for omega-3 fatty acids, including alpha linolenic acid (ALA) and the very long chain fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

Results: Omega-3 fatty acid (in dietary or capsules) ensures that a women's adipose tissue contains a reserve of these fatty acids for the developing fetus and the breast-fed newborn infant. This ensures the optimal cerebral and cognitive development of the infant. Omega-3 fatty acids could play a positive role in the prevention of menstrual syndrome and postmenopausal hot flushes.

Conclusion: Omega-3 fatty acids can help to prevent the development of certain cancers, particularly those of the breast and colon and possibly of the uterus and skin. Omega-3 fatty acids are likely to reduce the risk of postpartum depression, mani-depressive psychosis, dermatitis, hypertension, diabetes and, to a certain extent, age-related macular degeneration.

Title: Polyunsaturated fatty acids. Is there a role in postmenopausal osteoporosis prevention?

Authors: Paola Albertazzi and Keith Coupland

Study: To review the effect of a diet supplemented with polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) on prevention or treatment of osteoporosis. Only three, short-term, small studies have been performed in human so far. Two studies, one performed with bone markers and one with bone density showed a positive effect on PUFA on bone.

Results: Preliminary data have suggested that a diet with a low n-6/n-3 ratio may have beneficial effects on bone mineral density.

Conclusion: This information may be useful particularly for the prevention of disease in the elderly, since a diet rich in n-3 PUFA has been shown to have additional benefits on the cardiovascular, central systems and joints.

Title: Polyunsaturated fatty acids might reduce hot flushes: an indication from two controlled studies on soy isoflavones alone and with a PUFA supplement

Authors: Carlo Campagnoli, Chiara Abba, Simona Ambroggio, Clementina Peris, Marco Perona, and Patrizia Sanseverino.

Study: The object of this study is to investigate the effect on hot flushes of a soy isoflavone extract alone and with the addition of a supplement of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs). Subjects were postmenopausal women with more than five troublesome hot flushes per day. Both studies were double-blind randomized placebo-controlled trials.

Results: Both studies showed that isoflavone extract to have no greater efficacy on hot flushes than the placebo. During the 24 weeks of the study with soy isoflavone extract and PUFAs, there was a progressive and highly significant reduction in the number of hot flushes.

Conclusion: In these trials, the isoflavone extract did not show greater efficacy on the hot flushes than the placebo. The reduction of hot flushes observed in the with both isoflavone and PUFAs might be due to the PUFA supplement. PUFAs, particularly Omega-3 fatty acid could reduce hot flushes through their influence on neuronal membranes.