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healthbriefs

Antioxidants and Heart Disease Prevention



Dr. David Kavesteen

When cells use oxygen on a daily basis, they naturally produce byproducts known as free radicals, which travel throughout the body harming cells. Antioxidants, natural substances or nutrients found in our food, help slow down this process by acting as free radical scavengers, preventing the damage caused by the free radicals. Inadequate consumption of antioxidants can result in oxidative damage that can contribute to the development of coronary heart disease (CHD).

Studies on the development of atherosclerosis, cholesterol build-up in the arteries resulting in decreased blood flow to the heart, suggest that a higher intake of some antioxidants may offer protection and there is some evidence associating high dietary intake of antioxidants from fruits, vegetables and whole grains to a reduced risk of CHD. However, more controlled clinical trials are needed.

The current recommendation from the American Heart Association's nutrition committee is to eat a balanced diet with plenty of antioxidant-rich fruits, vegetables and whole grains. In addition, individuals can reduce their risk factors for heart disease by maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, quitting smoking, controlling blood pressure and diabetes, eating foods low in fat, lowering cholesterol and managing stress.

Source: Dr. David Kavesteen, M.D., FACC. Location: 1350 Deer Park Ave., North Babylon. For additional information, call 631-482-1355, email Info@HeartAndHealth.com or visit HeartAndHealth.com. See ads page 63.

Antibiotics not an Answer for Asthmatic Kids

A new study led by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, reveals that some antibiotics may be overprescribed for children with asthma. Of the 5,198 outpatient visits included in the analysis, antibiotics were routinely ordered during nearly one in six visits, although national health guidelines do not currently recommend them as a therapy. However, when best practices for treating asthma and preventing attacks were discussed by pediatricians during office visits, patients were less likely to receive

antibiotic prescriptions. The researchers suggest that doctors spend more time educating their patients about alternatives, as well as potential side effects of the drugs.

According to Dr. Kris De Boeck, from the University Hospital of Leuven, in Belgium, the side effects from overuse of antibiotics may include compromised immune systems, potentially worse asthma symptoms and the spread of antibiotic-resistant "superbugs."

Source: Pediatrics and Reuters Health

