

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776
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Did you fill up over the 4th with another burger, another scoop of potato salad, of course more sparklers in the yard, and wanting just one more big bang of fireworks in the sky to finish off the celebration? If so you're certainly not alone. As a nation we seem to think that more of any good thing is always better. We not only eat fortified foods but we drink vitamin-fortified water and pop dietary supplements by the millions of dollars' worth. But a recent report in Nature Medicine gives us just one more example of why more is not better, and might even be much worse.

This report didn't look at some exotic herb or super-berry drink. These doctors were studying one of our basic vitamins - E. Without vitamin E we can't survive. One of the main jobs of vitamin E is to protect us. It's a major antioxidant to neutralize toxins, heavy metals, drugs and radiation damage. It keeps our cholesterol in a safe form, and keeps nerve and muscle cells functioning. What a wonderful vitamin!

As popular as antioxidants are, especially in the supplement industry, you'd think that any and every antioxidant holds the key to a long and healthy life. And if E is an antioxidant too, then more should certainly be good. But E got one spot on its reputation some years ago. That study was trying to find a way to protect smokers from the damage of tobacco smoke. People were given vitamin E, C (another antioxidant), both or none. The study was stopped half way through, because the people getting E were actually getting more diseases than those getting none. What a nasty vitamin!

But there are claims that vitamin E can also help protect our brains, prevent cancers, and stop heart and artery diseases. Unfortunately, there's not a lot of good proof for any of those claims. And now this latest report has more bad news.

These doctors were using mice, not people. And they were using supplements, not just the vitamins found in foods. But the mice that were given high doses of vitamin E developed much weaker bones than those who got normal doses. With all the people suffering from osteopenia or osteoporosis these days, making it worse by taking supplements would be very unfortunate.

Of course what happens in mice does not have to happen in people. And most people don't plan to take such big doses. But if you eat several foods a day that are fortified with vitamin E - breakfast cereal, fruit juice, power bar, etc - plus take one or more supplement pills that contain the vitamin, you could very easily get much, much more than the recommended amount.

The current Recommended Daily Allowance, what most of us need to stay healthy, is only 15 milligrams (mg) a day. But the usual amount in many supplement pills is 400 mg! A single mega-dose pill can have three times as much. So it is easy to get super-mega-doses if you're taking supplements and supplemented foods. We might want to be careful.

The good side of vitamin E, as with most vitamins, is that we're not going to get too much by eating foods. Our bodies can better control how much we absorb when it comes in a food. And because the food fills us up more than a pill does, we're not so likely to overdose on one food. But then, 2 ounces or a quarter cup of almonds has a full day's allowance of vitamin E, and it's easy to overdose on them! Other good

sources of E are wheat germ, vegetable oils and foods made with them, and cold water fish such as salmon or haddock. Eat those, and leave the pills behind.

Here's a healthy, low fat dessert to use our local fresh blueberries, and get some almonds too. This serves 10 people, so have another party or take it to church to share.

Easy Fruit Cobbler

1 (28 oz) can sliced peaches in light syrup	1 (28 oz) can sliced pears in light syrup
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries	3 cups applesauce
2 cups baking mix	½ cup sliced almonds
1 Tbsp sugar	

Preheat oven to 375°F. Drain peaches. Do not drain pears. Combine peaches, pears with juice and blueberries in large bowl and mix gently. Add just 2 cups of applesauce and mix. Pour into 9x13 inch baking dish. Mix the other 1 cup of applesauce with the baking mix in separate bowl. Pour over fruit. Sprinkle with almonds and sugar. Bake 35-45 minutes until browned and bubbly. Serve with low-fat vanilla yogurt. Serves 10.