



PANTRY Post

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Many of you have already made use of our "bring us your Christmas recipe" service - we weigh up only what you need, so saving you time and money.

Ourselves we have been making Great Great Grandma's Christmas puddings and mincemeat, so these are now available and cakes will be coming toward the end of the month. If you have a special requirement such as no sugar or no citrus, then please let us know. If you wish to order fresh vegetables, stilton, or other items, we really need these before 14th December in order to be able to ensure delivery for collection by 24th December - yes we will be open!

On 1st December, Langport is holding its annual Christmas Fayre so you may be able to find something unusual if you come along - with many special treats as well!! The shops will be open until 6 p.m. with the fireworks starting shortly afterwards.



Dark nights, short days . . .

Seasonal Affective Disorder ("SAD") is twice as common in women as men and is most likely start in your thirties; it is said to affect up to 20% of the adult population.



Research has now linked SAD to a decrease in hormones and brain chemicals that control mood and sleeping patterns. One of our customers has found that increasing the intake of UDO's Oil as the clocks change has helped offset these effects. Others have found rhodiola and increasing their vitamin B complex intake works for them. Avocados, beans, bananas, wheat germ, porridge oats, brown rice and wholemeal pastas are foods that help to increase serotonin, the brain chemical that makes you feel happy. Vitamin D is also an important nutrient to take as levels drop during the winter months. St. John's Wort is well known for its mood lifting properties - in Germany it is prescribed three times more than Prozac, though not for those taking blood thinning drugs such as Warfarin.



Eat, drink and be merry!

- Slippery Elm is an effective soothing herb if your stomach is complaining about the amount you have tried to pack in. The best way to take it is in tea form.



- And the trouble with alcohol is this, it pulls fluids out of your body and takes a lot of valuable minerals with it - especially potassium. Potassium is an essential tool to maintain the balance of fluids in your body - so top up your levels with a banana. Eating just one banana - preferably a Freetrade one, will also give you a burst of magnesium (which controls blood sugar levels), and vitamin C.

Then of course there is Milk Thistle - this helps to protect the liver as well as encouraging the production of new liver cells to replace old or damaged ones! Cleansing the liver also increases energy levels and general well being and an efficient one assists with weight loss and brain function! A. Vogel now offer their tincture in tablet as well as tincture form.

New flower essences

We are pleased to announce that we have introduced new flower essences. These are hand made in Devon by Gaia Essences to Dr Bach's original recipe. The maker searches out the flowers and grows many herself - as well as supplying some of the other flower essence makers with seeds. The essences are stronger than those more generally available; we have leaflets outlining their different therapeutic uses. These cover addiction, despair and depression, fear, loneliness, over-sensitivity and relationship issues.



. . . and the season of runny noses

Over 200 different viruses have been identified which cause cold symptoms - hence the reason the average British adult suffers three colds a year whilst the average child puts up with seven! Research on winter remedies shows that vitamin C is best used to reduce the duration of the common cold rather than prevent it.

Complimenting nutrients such as Vitamin C and zinc with herbs such as Echinacea has been shown to be more effective than taking any of the three separately. Because of the vast weight of positive research supporting it, Echinacea has become the mainstay of the natural relief from the general symptoms. As Professor Eccles from the Common Cold Research Unit has indicated "there is sufficient evidence to say that zinc and certain types of good quality echinacea help fight off colds and shorten their duration...starting to take it when you have the cold is too late!"

Research published earlier this year in the Lancet found that Echinacea can more than halve the risk of catching a cold and decreased its duration by a day and a half.

A. Vogel's Echinaforce is the only echinacea remedy marketed worldwide where an immune modulating action has been identified, which means in addition to colds it is also useful in combating influenza type infections and similar upper respiratory tract conditions. Echinaforce is available as fresh herb tincture, tincture tablets or now as a throat spray. Echinacea and garlic, which helps loosen phlegm, are combined in Potter's Antifect and Lane's provide a Sage and

Garlic remedy for helping clear the bronchial passages.

Several other herbs can be combined with Echinacea to offer more relief of specific symptoms or boost aspects of the immune system that Echinacea does not affect. To become better than the average Briton in terms of colds and flu then you will need to boost your immune system, eat lots of garlic, or take a supplement, and plenty of vitamin C - poor nutrition is the most common cause of a poor immune system. A diet rich in the anti-oxidant immune boosting foods such as kiwi, avocado and cabbage as well as those rich in vitamin E and beta carotene will help keep them away. Lots of vitamin B will also help produce the anti-bodies that help fight infections.

Plantain has a whole host of benefits, including anti-viral, local anti-inflammatory, expectorant and demulcent actions. Many of these make Plantain a specific herb for those with a bad 'head cold' easing congestion and discomfort of the membranes of the ear, nose and throat, including 'glue ear' and repeated ear infections. Elderberries stimulate the immune system and have anti-catarhal and local anti-inflammatory actions, making it especially good for heavier colds and influenza that involve deafness and sinusitis - we stock the original Sambucol. Garlic is effective in killing many of the infectious bacteria that no longer respond to antibiotics by stopping them from multiplying. Combining Echinacea's immune boosting properties with Goldenseal makes an ideal combination for acute infections; it is regarded by many as more heavy duty! Goldenseal's powerful anti-microbial actions and astringent effects have ideal effects in the gut for those suffering digestive infections, such as gastritis.



Mediterranean again

Recently published in Neurology were some new findings based on researchers' observations of Alzheimer sufferers over four and a half years. These showed that those patients who most closely followed a Mediterranean diet were 76 per cent less likely to die during the study period than those who followed the diet the least.

Lead researcher Nikos Scarmeas of Columbia University Medical Center in New York, and member of the American Academy of Neurology,



said: "The more closely people followed the Mediterranean diet, the more they reduced their mortality... those Alzheimer's patients who followed the diet very religiously lived an average four years longer."

Another study by the same researchers, published earlier last year in the Annals of Neurology reported that elderly individuals whose diet closely resembled the Mediterranean diet had a 40 per cent lower risk of Alzheimer's than those who adhered the least to the diet.

Prostate - flaxseed, berries and tea

A new US study from Duke University Medical Center indicates that flaxseed provides a key defence against prostate cancer. Researchers recruited men with prostate cancer who were scheduled to have their prostate glands removed. After the surgeries, researchers examined tumour cells from each subject and results showed that flaxseed intervention dramatically slowed tumour growth - by as much as 30 to 40 per cent.

The study's lead investigator, Dr Wendy Demark-Wahnefried, told Dukemed News that the omega-3 fatty acids in flaxseed may modify the way that cancer cells lump together or attach to healthy cells. She also noted that the lignans in the outer shell of flaxseed might help cut the blood supply to cancer cells.



Lignans are believed to help remove testosterone from the body, which may assist in suppressing prostate cancer cell growth.

This study complements a previous National Cancer Institute study in which researchers examined 14 years of dietary and medical records for more than 47,000 middle-aged and older men. Results showed that a high intake of EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids was associated with reduced prostate cancer risk, while advanced prostate

cancer risk was more than 25 per cent lower among men with the highest intake.

In addition to omega-3 fatty acids, men with an elevated risk of prostate cancer might get additional protection from herbs used for centuries as anti-inflammatories, including turmeric, green tea polyphenols, and ginger. These herbs are natural COX-2 inhibitors. COX-2 is the enzyme-protein complex that prompts inflammation that causes arthritis pain and is believed to play a role in the growth of several types of cancer.

Then there is saw palmetto oil. It is the essential oil in the berries that contains the active ingredients for the regulation of DHT - dihydrotestosterone. A. Vogel's Protasan capsules have recently been licensed under the Traditional Herbal Medicine Directive and contain the oil of four berries (320 mg) - so giving a one a day dose.

Finally, last month's American Journal of Epidemiology reported on a new prostate cancer study conducted by the National Cancer Center in Japan. This showed that whilst Green tea intake had no preventive effect on prostate cancer, researchers discovered a link between green tea intake and a reduced risk of advanced prostate cancer. Results also showed that the beneficial effect of green tea was dose-dependent - subjects who consumed the most green tea were the least likely to have advanced prostate cancer!



Zinc again

We have mentioned before that zinc deficiency leads to susceptibility to infections and that increased oxidative stress is common in people over the age of 55. One study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed that one year of zinc supplementation (45 mg daily) in older subjects reduced the incidence of infections, inflammation, and oxidative stress compared to placebo. A recent report in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition takes this a step further by showing that subjects with normal zinc levels had less incidence and duration of pneumonia, less antibiotic use, and fewer days of antibiotic use compared to subjects who had low blood levels of zinc.

This is where most researchers caution that further study is necessary before supplements can be recommended. But the team at the Jean Mayer US Department of Agriculture Human Nutrition Research Center on Ageing at Tufts University went off script with this note: "Zinc supplementation to maintain normal serum zinc concentrations in the elderly may help reduce the incidence of pneumonia and associated morbidity."

The National Institute of Health's official recommended dietary allowance of zinc is 11 mg for adult males and eight mg for adult females - compare that to the 45 mg per day in the first study! Dietary sources of zinc include red meat, poultry, beans, nuts, whole grains, and dairy products. But the two zinc powerhouses are oysters and cabbage - especially oysters, which also happen to be a good source of vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids.

SNIPPETS

Inflammation

If any sort appears over the holiday season then try a cup of nettle tea. Nettle has been used for centuries to treat dozens of ailments, including sciatica - because active compounds in the leaves reduce inflammation. St. John's Wort Oil is said to be an effective massage oil for relief of sciatica, arthritis and back pain.

More organic

The latest Soil Association organic market report states that whilst sales in 2006 in the UK rose by 22 per cent on 2005, those through independent shops increased by 37 per cent as consumers became more aware of local rather than just the supermarket approach - hence the increase of 53 per cent in sales through vegetable box schemes - and not a plastic bag in sight!

You may have also missed the government's own studies showing that organic farming typically uses 30 per cent less energy than non-organic! Also, in June the European Union established new rules for organic farming and the labelling of the products made from those crops. Now, in order to bear the EU-approved organic food logo, a product must contain at least 95 percent organic ingredients.

Oh my back!

According to a study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, acupuncture was found to be more effective at treating back pain than conventional therapies! The researchers found that almost half the patients treated with acupuncture felt relief, this compares to only one quarter who received drugs and other Western therapies. Interestingly they found fake acupuncture was found to work almost as well as the real thing - which was ascribed to the body reacting positively to the needle prick!

Diets, cholesterol and snacks

Many of you will recall the campaigns to reduce fat consumption and yet in the USA whilst over the last 30 years calories from fat have been cut by almost 20 per cent, obesity is spiraling as it is here. This is being driven by sugar, refined carbohydrates and starchy food consumption. A review comparing low Glycaemic Load ("GL") diets with conventional ones based on calories found the former to be more effective as well as reducing the bad 'LDL' cholesterol. Low GL foods include brown basmati rice, quinoa, oat flakes and rough oat cakes, xylitol, granola and low GL bars.

Dietary cholesterol intake does not present the major heart disease danger. The true danger comes further along in the cholesterol chain-of-events when the effects of oxidation and inflammation on LDL play a key role in the development of atherosclerosis (narrowing of the arteries). Plant sterols actually help block absorption of dietary cholesterol.



A Virginia Polytechnic Institute study assessed plant sterol levels in different seeds and nuts. Top of the list - wheat germ. If you are looking for a snack, then the study found sunflower seeds and pistachio nuts to have relatively high plant sterol levels.

Green tea and bones

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has published a study showing that women tea drinkers had a total bone mineral density (BMD) in the hip nearly three per cent higher than non-tea drinkers. Tea, red wine, and various fruits and vegetables are primary sources of polyphenols - natural antioxidants that the researchers believe are responsible for the BMD benefit in their study. So when you choose a tea, note that green tea contains as much as four times more polyphenols than black tea!

Langport Complementary Health

We are pleased to publicise the establishment of the above in the newly renovated warehouse in Bow Yard.

It comprises: **Jane Kibbler**, a licensed homeopath specialising in the elimination of digestive problems and stress-induced illness;

Judith O'Hagan, a Transpersonal Psychotherapist who in addition to general work with relationships, bereavement and helping people to handle the changes that life brings, specialises in helping people with cancer and fertility problems;

Lynn Glenister, a qualified therapist in acupressure, holistic massage, Reiki healing and astrology

Shelagh Gotto who provides a tailor-made therapeutic programme of yogananas (posture work).

You can choose whether you take the mind, body, spiritual or holistic approach!

