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and urgent advances in modern, underground medicine

Discover How A Seaweed Supplement Could Ease The Misery Of Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Imagine being in almost constant abdominal pain, having to rush to the toilet every 40 minutes during the day and never getting a proper night's rest. Imagine the crushing feeling of fatigue, the sense of being disabled, with no hope that life will ever return to normal.

That was the situation Arifa Grebennikova faced for four and a half years, after being diagnosed with ulcerative colitis (a form of inflammatory bowel disease) in 2007. She was told that her condition was incurable, that lifelong medication would be essential, changing her diet would make no difference and that she could expect to face surgery and a high risk of colon cancer.

Arifa was prescribed one kind of drug after another, including steroids and powerful immune-suppressants, but none provided any relief from her debilitating symptoms.

Then, returning from a trip to Russia, her husband brought back a few jars of Kelp Jelly, a certified nutritional health product for gastro-intestinal disorders that had undergone clinical trials at the Russian Academy of Science in Moscow.¹ After taking the jelly for two months, Arifa was a different person. In her own words, she 'felt so incredibly healthy' that she was even able to eat a full Christmas dinner with a glass of wine – when before, just the smell of cooking had her dashing to the loo! Today, Arifa feels 'brilliant', has come off all medication and is able to eat a healthy, nutritious diet.

The miraculous turnaround in her health spurred Arifa to make the trip to Moscow to meet the inventor of Kelp Jelly, Professor Vyacheslav Sova. Over the next year, they worked together to develop a new version of Kelp Jelly for the UK market, with a flavour more suited to the British palate. Then, in March 2012, Arifa set up the company Seafarmacy Ltd, to promote and distribute the new Kelp Jelly in the UK.

Kelp Jelly is made from a brown seaweed, *Ascophyllum nodosum*, which is common around the coasts of the North Atlantic. The product provides a rich source of soluble fibre that fills up the colon and helps to normalise peristaltic contractions. This prevents the violent and irregular spasms that cause crippling lower abdominal pain for so many patients with irritable bowel syndrome or inflammatory bowel disease. Because it forms a thick gel that holds water in the colon, Kelp Jelly also regulates bowel movements and prevents and relieves both constipation and diarrhoea.

Kelp Jelly supports the immune system, gut bacteria and thyroid gland

Better still, Kelp Jelly could actually help to prevent the inappropriate reaction of the immune system that causes irritable bowel disease. Brown seaweeds contain a unique polysaccharide compound called fucoidan, which has been shown in animal studies to suppress the inflammatory response involved in autoimmune diseases.²

Kelp Jelly could also support a healthy population of 'friendly' bacteria in your gut. An initial pilot project at the University of York has identified 14 kinds of potentially beneficial bacteria in Kelp Jelly.³ Some of these are similar to probiotic bacteria that have been used successfully in the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease. Kelp Jelly also contains soluble kinds of fibre, including alginates, which have prebiotic effects – that is to say, they feed and sustain a healthy population of beneficial gut bacteria.⁴

The health benefits of Kelp Jelly are not just restricted to the digestive system. Thanks to its high content

(Continued on page 3)

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A cutting-edge new supplement could finally provide the solution to your weight-loss woesPage 3
Phytomega-3 provides an ecologically-friendly, uncontaminated, vegetable source of beneficial omega-3 fatty acidsPage 5

Dear Reader,

Imagine if it was virtually impossible to get your breath and it felt like you had air trapped inside your lungs, which was also preventing you from exhaling properly. And if that wasn't bad enough, your chest felt so tight that it was like a giant had a vice-like grip around it and was gradually increasing the pressure... making you feel like you were suffocating.

If you suffer from asthma and have ever experienced a severe attack, you'll be only too familiar with this scenario. If not, it's not hard to imagine how terrifying this must be.

Asthma can develop at any age, and an attack can be triggered by a number of causes, including: environmental factors, such as an increased sensitivity to toxins from cigarette smoke and exhaust fumes; a hereditary susceptibility; allergies to pollen, pets, dust and certain foods; and medication – including both prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Fortunately, there are natural remedies that can be used alongside conventional treatments to help prevent the onset and severity of an attack. In some cases a combination of these approaches has been so successful that sufferers have been able to reduce their dependency on their inhalers. However, it's vital that you only do this under medical supervision, and that you're monitored regularly by your doctor in case the asthma returns.

Make sure a food allergy or intolerance isn't worsening your asthma. Typical culprits include foods like cow's milk, nuts, chocolate, shellfish, strawberries and tomatoes. A full-blown asthma attack can then result when molecules of these problem foods enter your bloodstream and irritate the inside of your bronchial tubes. A qualified nutritionist can help you identify and eliminate problematic foods from your diet.

Eat plenty of foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as oily fish. They stimulate anti-inflammatory chemicals such as prostaglandin E1, which helps reverse the tightness in your tubes (*Ter Ark 1997, 69(3): 31-33*). Foods that contain beta carotene (another beneficial anti-inflammatory) such as carrots, spinach and broccoli, are also thought to help reduce the risk of an attack (*JAMA 1996, 275(9): 699-700*). Include more onions in your diet – several studies have found that raw or cooked onions can successfully help manage asthma (*Biochem Pharmacol 1988, 37(23): 4479-4486*).

One nutrient that is proving successful is N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC), which helps break up the mucus inside your bronchial tubes and helps expectoration. NAC has also been used in severe cases of asthma with good results. The dose is 600mg once or twice a day. It needs to be taken together with vitamin C (500mg), which also breaks up mucus (*Eur J Clin Nutr 1996, 50(9): 573-579*). The mineral magnesium taken in doses of 100mg a day (in a form called elemental magnesium), has also been found to help asthmatics by reversing the tightening of the bronchial tubes (*Clin Sci 1998, 95(2): 137-142*).

Until next month,



Rachael Linkie, Editor

P.S. Another all-natural way to help alleviate the breathing problems caused by asthma – which could even end your reliance on your inhaler – is contained in the special report inside this month's issue. This revolutionary device can help you breathe easier than you've ever breathed before... not only can it massively reduce asthma attacks, it also takes on bronchitis and allergies like hay fever in as little as 15 minutes a day.

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Publisher:	Editor:	Customer Services Manager:	Production Manager:
Andrew Miller	Rachael Linkie	Sally Burchell	Dean Murphy

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of a highly bioavailable form of organic iodine, Kelp Jelly could help to ensure healthy functioning of the thyroid gland. Iodine deficiency has reached epidemic proportions worldwide and has also been linked to obesity, cognitive impairment, heart disease, psychiatric disorders and various forms of cancer.⁵

The iodine and other trace elements in Kelp Jelly enable the thyroid gland to produce hormones that control your body's metabolism, regulating everything from body temperature to blood fat levels.⁶ Too little thyroid hormone because of insufficient iodine in the diet is often the cause of unexplained weight gain, tiredness and depression. Thyroid problems can also involve deficiencies in trace elements such as selenium, which enables thyroid hormones to work properly. Kelp Jelly contains the right balance of iodine and selenium for optimal thyroid health.

Iodine is vital for health and could help prevent cancer

In addition to its role in thyroid function, iodine is a vital micronutrient needed by every body organ and system. Recent research has revealed how iodine is metabolized in the human body through a series of stages involving the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, thyroid gland and blood.⁷ A link between iodine deficiency and breast cancer was established some 45 years ago and laboratory studies have shown that seaweed extracts kill human breast cancer cells.⁸

Supplementing your diet with an inorganic form of iodine, such as potassium iodide, could be a risky business, since too much iodine in the body can be as harmful as too little. The iodine in Kelp Jelly, on the other hand, is in the form of iodinated protein, from which the body utilises just as much as it needs, without any risk of overdose.

Kelp Jelly should not be confused with the many powdered kelp supplements available. The unique, low-temperature technology used in creating Seafarmacy's Kelp Jelly gently extracts the contents from the algal cells and preserves all of their biologically active elements in a living form that is remarkably similar to human blood plasma. All of the seaweed's valuable nutrients are available in an organic form that the body can recognise and utilise. By contrast, powdered kelp supplements consist of dried and crushed seaweed, including the indigestible cellulose cell walls, and so have a far lower biological effect.

What to take for best results

The recommended dosage of Seafarmacy Kelp Jelly is one tablespoon in the morning, 30 minutes before breakfast and one tablespoon in the evening, just before going to bed (at least one hour after your evening meal). Follow with a sip of water or juice.

In the case of irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, peptic ulcers or other serious digestive system problems, take one full tablespoon three times during the day, before meals. For these cases, a course of three jars of Kelp Jelly during the first month, followed by one jar per month, is recommended.

If you are taking medication, you should take Kelp Jelly at least one hour before your next dose of medication, as it may increase drug absorption.

...CUTTING-EDGE HEALTH UPDATE

A Cutting-Edge New Supplement Could Finally Provide The Solution To Your Weight-Loss Woes

Let's be honest with ourselves: there's no single magic-bullet weight-loss solution that will work for everyone. Real, lasting weight loss is about much more than what you eat – or don't eat. Your body's metabolism, or its rate of burning fuel for energy, can be impacted by dozens of factors – many of which have little to do with what you actually put in your mouth.

Age alone can be a major factor, as your metabolism naturally starts to slow down the older you get... which is why losing weight becomes notoriously more and more difficult as the years pass.

Obviously there's no substitute for a healthy diet and regular exercise, but a cutting-edge new liquid supplement can jump-start the weight-loss process and help you shift those excess pounds once and for all.

L-Carnitine, Natural Raspberry Ketones and Green Coffee Bean with Green Tea, as its long name indicates, contains an impressive line-up of ingredients that work together to help kick-start your metabolism, boost your energy levels and promote weight loss. The supplement also contains a blend of herbs – amla (also known as Indian gooseberry), capsicum and ginger – all of which have

(Continued on page 4)

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long been used in traditional herbal medicine to aid digestion and improve the absorption of nutrients, which promotes overall good health.

L-carnitine and raspberry ketones help your body metabolise fat

L-carnitine is an amino acid made in the liver that plays an important role in promoting fat metabolism, which, in turn, helps maintain a healthy weight.¹⁻⁴

Sometimes the body cannot produce enough L-carnitine for its needs, so this is where supplementation can be beneficial. The new supplement from Nature's Answer contains a pure form of L-carnitine that is vital to the process of releasing energy from fat. It transports fatty acids into the mitochondria – which are the 'batteries' inside all your cells – where they are 'burned' to produce energy.

Its presence not only means that fat can be used up efficiently, but it also helps to process other amino acids so that they can be used as a back-up energy supply for your body. In addition, L-carnitine promotes efficient digestion since it stimulates the production of digestive juices.

L-carnitine can also benefit your heart and circulation, as it has been found to lower total cholesterol and raise levels of HDL ('good') cholesterol.⁵

Raspberry ketones (naturally derived compounds that produce the scent of raspberries) have been included in the formula, as research suggests that they promote the creation of adiponectin – a protein used by the body to regulate fat metabolism. The slimmer the body is, the more adiponectin the fat cells release. Adiponectin enhances your muscles' ability to use carbohydrates for energy, increases the rate at which your body breaks down fat, and also reduces appetite. In addition, animal studies have shown that it reduces both abdominal and liver fat.

Green coffee and green tea both help your body burn fat and lose weight

Green coffee is the term used to refer to the unprocessed coffee bean. The normal roasting process, designed to release the aroma and flavour of coffee, destroys some of its active components, including chlorogenic acid. It is chlorogenic acid that can reduce blood glucose levels and promote fat loss. Its ability to increase lean body mass has been the subject of several studies.⁶⁻⁹

One study lasting 22 weeks examined the efficacy

and safety of green coffee extract in reducing weight and body mass in 16 overweight adults.¹⁰ Those taking part in the study had three separate six-week treatment periods, separated by two-week rest periods. In one period they received high doses of green coffee extract, in another low doses of the same extract, and in the third only a placebo.

Significant reductions were observed in body weight, body mass index and the percentage of body fat, and there was also a small decrease in heart rate, when the subjects took green coffee extract. And in six cases the weight loss was enough to shift them from being defined as 'pre-obese' to 'normal weight'. The researchers concluded that green coffee extract could be effective in reducing weight in 'pre-obese' adults, and an inexpensive means of preventing obesity in overweight adults.

Green tea has a long list of established health benefits, from warding off cancer and boosting immunity to lowering cholesterol and preventing allergy attacks. It has also been included in the formula as it has been proven to promote weight loss.¹¹

It contains a small amount of caffeine, which serves as a mild appetite suppressant. In addition, studies suggest that green tea extracts high in catechins are able to activate fat-burning mechanisms in the body and increase the conversion from fat to energy.^{12, 13}

Studies indicate that it is this combination of caffeine and catechins, which makes green tea so effective at combating obesity.¹⁴ Researchers have also found that it can help ward off metabolic syndrome as a result of its ability to slow down the absorption of fat after meals and by reducing the deposit of 'visceral fat' around the organs in the abdomen.¹⁵

What to take for best results

The recommended dosage for L-Carnitine Raspberry Ketones and Green Coffee Bean with Green Tea is one tablespoon (15ml) each day, taken with a meal. You should refrigerate the product after opening.

For best results, the supplement should be taken in conjunction with regular exercise and a healthy diet, which eliminates processed foods and refined carbohydrates.

As always, you are advised to consult your doctor before starting any new supplement, particularly if you are pregnant, nursing, taking any medications or have an existing medical condition.

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Phytomega-3 Provides An Ecologically-Friendly, Uncontaminated, Vegetable Source Of Beneficial Omega-3 Fatty Acids

These days, most health-conscious people know about omega-3 fatty acids' numerous health benefits. Present in oily fish and some seeds, they've been found to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Omega-3 fatty acids are highly concentrated in the brain and also appear to be important for healthy cognitive function and mood. Symptoms of omega-3 fatty acid deficiency include fatigue, memory difficulties, dry skin, poor circulation, heart problems, mood swings and depression.

There are several types of omega-3 fatty acids. Two essential ones, called docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), are mainly found in oily fish. Some seeds, such as linseeds, contain alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), an omega-3 fatty acid that is partially converted into DHA and EPA in the body.

If you are vegan or vegetarian and you include linseeds or linseed oil in your diet, you might assume that you are getting enough omega-3. Unfortunately, this may not be the case. The conversion of ALA to DHA and EPA is an inefficient process at best and it can be further suppressed by genetic make-up, age and a large number of dietary factors, including omega-6 fatty acids from other seed and nut oils.

To get over this problem, Phytomega-3 has recently been developed... it's one of the first supplements in the UK to give vegetarians and vegans a direct supply of the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA, from natural algae. Phytomega-3 is approved by the Vegetarian Society. It means that vegetarians and vegans can now ensure a healthy intake of EPA and DHA, without having to rely on their body's ability to produce them from ALA.

Avoid the fishy aftertaste and possible contamination with environmental poisons

Phytomega-3 is not just for vegetarians and

vegans. Many people dislike the fishy taste and 'repeats' they get from fish oil supplements and some people find them difficult to digest.

When you think about it, where do the fish get the EPA and DHA from in the first place? Yes, you've guessed it, from algae. All seaweeds are kinds of algae. These plants are at the bottom of the marine food chain and are the primary source of omega-3 fatty acids, which fish concentrate in their tissues.

However, fish also accumulate other things present in the marine environment, like mercury and persistent pesticides, which can contaminate some fish oils. This is another good reason to choose omega-3 fatty acids from algae instead of fish oil. And with fish stocks under threat from overfishing, algae also provide a sustainable and ecologically preferable source of these important nutrients.

Recent research findings confirm just how important DHA and EPA are for our health. These fatty acids have long been recommended for preventing heart disease and a new study from Singapore, involving more than 63,000 people, has concluded that the risks of coronary heart disease and stroke are significantly lower in people who consume them as a regular part of their diet.¹

A meta-analysis, published last year in *The Lancet*, which evaluated the results from 22 separate studies, confirmed that higher intakes of DHA and EPA are associated with lower rates of fatal heart attacks.²

New research uncovers how DHA and EPA benefit health

Omega-3 fatty acids appear to work in several different ways to improve heart health. EPA decreases the amount of fat that the liver produces and releases into the bloodstream, while DHA helps to break down the damaging forms of cholesterol and convert them into protective kinds.³

Both of these fatty acids also reduce the tendency for blood platelets to stick together and form dangerous clots. In a recent clinical trial, 520mg of DHA and 120mg of EPA, taken for just four weeks, were found to reduce measures of platelet aggregation (clot formation) in healthy adults.⁴

DHA (but not EPA) has also been shown to reduce blood pressure in human clinical trials.⁵ Recent animal studies have discovered that DHA dilates the blood vessels by activating a particular kind of potassium channel in muscle

(Continued on page 6)

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cell membranes.⁶ Drugs that activate these same potassium channels are currently being developed, to prevent strokes or to treat high blood pressure, asthma, an overactive bladder and erectile dysfunction. But DHA already does the job naturally, safely and without the side effects that often come with pharmaceutical drugs.

Cutting cardiovascular risks is far from the only health benefit of omega-3 fatty acids. These compounds have powerful anti-inflammatory activity, so are useful in preventing or combating a wide range of inflammatory diseases.

Omega-3 fatty acids have long been used by rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis patients to effectively alleviate joint stiffness and pain.⁷ Not only are these fatty acids anti-inflammatory in themselves, according to new research they are metabolised in the body into compounds called resolvins and protectins, which have even greater potency to inhibit inflammation.⁸

Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome are also inflammatory conditions that can be helped by omega-3 fatty acids.⁹ In a newly-published study from Finland, which followed 2,212 men over a 20-year period, those with the highest blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids had a one-third reduction in their risk of type 2 diabetes, irrespective of other diet and lifestyle factors.¹⁰

DHA and EPA can also improve brain function and mood. Over the last two decades they have been increasingly used in the treatment of various mental illnesses, mainly in mood disorders but also in attention-deficit disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and schizophrenia.¹¹ A recent study at the New York State Psychiatric Institute revealed that blood levels of DHA and EPA were inversely related to the severity of anxiety.¹²

What to take for best results

The recommended dose of Phytomega-3 is one capsule taken daily with food, or as professionally directed. Phytomega-3 can be taken by vegetarians and vegans and is free-from wheat, gluten, dairy, soya, yeast, sugar, salt and nuts.

If you are under medical supervision, please consult a doctor before use. Caution is particularly advised if you are taking anticoagulant medication.

...CUTTING-EDGE HEALTH UPDATE

Powerful Antioxidant Formula Helps Protect Against Numerous Degenerative Diseases – From Cancer To Alzheimer’s

When you think of red wines like merlot, shiraz, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon, they do not immediately bring to mind the ingredients for a health supplement.

Red wine does of course have a well-known antioxidant effect. Antioxidants ‘mop up’ excess free radicals – rogue molecules that accelerate the ageing process and contribute to a host of degenerative diseases including heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, Alzheimer’s and cancer.

However, drinking the sort of quantities required to achieve a significant antioxidant effect would probably be counter-productive in terms of the negative impact that much red wine would have on your health.

Fortunately, it’s now possible to get all the health benefits without any of the attendant risks that come with drinking vast quantities of red wine. An innovative new supplement has now become available in powder form that’s made from the skins of organic red grapes, which are an amazingly rich source of antioxidants that have incredible health-giving properties.

The man behind this new supplement, called Bioflavia, is Robert Egli. He is the production manager at the 150-acre organic and biodynamic Southbrook Vineyards, in the Niagara wine region of Ontario, Canada, where the grape skins are sourced.

He explains how the birth of Bioflavia began about four years ago: “The pumice from the wine-making process – that is, the skins and seeds of the grapes – they get thrown in the garbage. And we began to think there might be some value in them.”

Robert Egli’s thinking was that maybe some of the pumice could supply a potent antioxidant without the need to drink large quantities of red wine. So the grape skins were dried out at a low temperature to preserve their health benefits and milled into a fine powder, which could then be added to food.

Robert Egli has spent about 14 years in the wine

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11. Psychiatr Clin North Am. 2013; 36(1):15-23

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business: “Our business is currently 80 per cent wine and 20 per cent Bioflavia. But in five years’ time I think Bioflavia will outsell the wine,” he says. Based on initial research findings and a wealth of positive testimonials, this is no empty boast.

Tests prove Bioflavia is a superior antioxidant

The antioxidant strength of foods is measured by a system known as Orac (Oxygen Radical Absorption Capacity). The higher a food’s Orac value the greater its ability to neutralise harmful free radicals.

In late 2010, Egli decided to check the Orac value of milled grape skins, and he found the results were astounding.

“When we tested it for the Orac value and we got the test result, we were blown away,” he said. “It was higher than anything we have ever seen. The value was probably 10 times more than we expected. In fact, the Orac value of Bioflavia is the highest that we have found.”

The realisation dawned that the powder from milled grape skins was a new super food. “We felt we had something that had great health benefits,” he said.

To establish Orac values, foods undergo specialised testing and analysis and the findings are measured in mmol/100g; 100g of Bioflavia has an Orac value of 110,000 units.

So the recommended daily 10g serving of Bioflavia has 11,000 Orac units – which provides a powerful boost of health-promoting antioxidants. This puts Bioflavia ahead of other foods which are renowned for their antioxidant properties, such as acai fruit, raspberries, blueberries, goji berries and cranberries (these foods have Orac values for 10g ranging from 329 to 10,270 units).

The effectiveness of Bioflavia appears to be a result of the conditions in which its grapes of origin are grown: organic, biodynamic wine-making uses natural processes and rejects the use of synthetic chemicals. “We don’t spray our grapes,” explains Egli. “Non-organic grape skins tend to have pesticides and heavy metals in the skins. But our grapes fight off fungal pressure on their own – they build up antioxidants to ward off disease.”

Preliminary research findings on Bioflavia are extremely promising...

Brock University, in Ontario, has begun research on Bioflavia. The initial results look promising, with

Bioflavia appearing to bring about a reduction in the growth and size of human cancer cells – both in the laboratory and in patients.

“We are hoping the university will report in the New Year,” said Egli. Obviously, *JNHS* will be keeping a close eye on developments in this area and will report on the results as soon as they become available.

But verdicts have already come in from satisfied consumers in Canada where the product is already established. As Egli says: “Almost all of our customers love it. Some have said that it makes their hair grow quicker, some have said it helps with allergies, and some have reported tumour reduction. Basically, it builds your immune system. I think it makes a huge difference – you feel energised, have clarity of thought and can fight off colds and flu.”

What to take for best results

The recommended dosage for Bioflavia is 10g a day (although Robert Egli suggests introducing it into the diet gradually, starting with 5g a day). The pleasant-tasting powder can be sprinkled on cereal or salads, added to a smoothie or juice, or mixed with yoghurt.

You can even use it in muffins and bread. As Egli explains: “You can definitely bake with it. We wanted to check it out to see what would happen if we baked it, and after 30 minutes at 375F [190C], there was a 10 per cent reduction in the Orac value – this was felt to be insignificant.

As always, it is recommended that you consult your doctor prior to taking a new supplement, especially if you are currently on any medication.

...CUTTING-EDGE HEALTH UPDATE

High-Dose Vitamin D3 Can Provide Much-Needed Relief From Chronic Hives

According to the latest research findings, vitamin D3 can help to relieve chronic urticaria (hives) – a condition with no cure and few treatment options, aside from antihistamines which can cause unpleasant side effects such as drowsiness, headaches, indigestion and a dry mouth (*Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, 7 February 2014).

Hives create red, itchy welts on the skin and sometimes swelling. If symptoms continue for more than six weeks the condition is termed chronic.

(Continued on page 8)

The Journal of Natural Health Solutions

Editorial Panel

Marcus Webb, BSc(Hons) Ost Med, DO, ND, MRN, PGCert (Osteoporosis), MIBiol, CBiol

A qualified naturopath and osteopath with over 20 years experience in the field of complementary medicine. Marcus is a Member of the General Osteopathic Council, General Council and Register of Naturopaths, British Medical Acupuncture Society, Chartered member of Institute of Biology, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. He has written numerous health books including *The Herbal Companion*, *The Herbal Bible* and *Healing Touch*

Dr Marios Kyriazis (MD, MSc, MIBiol, CBiol, DGM)

One of the UK's leading anti-ageing experts. Dr Kyriazis works in private practice and has postgraduate qualifications in the science of ageing from the University of London and the Royal College of Physicians. He is using both conventional and complementary therapies.

Martin Hum (PhD, DHD)

Qualified nutritional therapist and health journalist with 20 years experience in the field of nutritional medicine. He is a past Chairman of the Institute for Optimum Nutrition, an independent educational charity and the UK's leading training institute for nutritional therapists.

Nigel Summerley, LLSC

Nigel is a health writer, alternative health expert and qualified homeopath.

Paula Bartimeus (DHD)

A trained nutritional therapist and health writer, who has worked in the field of nutrition for over two decades. For eight years she was Editor of *Optimum Nutrition* magazine published by the Institute for Optimum Nutrition and now works as a freelance writer and editor, specialising in natural foods, wholefood cookery and nutraceuticals.

Dr Michael Perring (MB BChir FCP(SA) DPM UKCP Registered Psychotherapist)

Dr Michael Perring is a General Practitioner with a special interest in nutrition, sexual medicine and healthy ageing. He is currently Medical Director of the Optimal Health of Harley Street Clinic and is co-author of *Get Fit Feel Fantastic*.

Robin Shepherd (DO)

Qualified osteopath and expert in pain-relief therapy. Since graduating from The British School of Osteopathy in 1990 he has taught at post and undergraduate levels to both osteopaths and medics, whilst also running a busy private practice in Surrey. He specialises in a treatment called Intra Muscular Stimulation for chronic pain relief. Currently sits on the board of the General Osteopathic Council, their Investigating and Communication committees and is Chairman of the International Affairs Committee.

Chanchal Cabrera (MNIMH, AHG)

Medical herbalist, clinical aromatherapist and nutritional counsellor in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Publishes widely in professional journals and lectures internationally on medical herbalism.

Cristina D. Howard (BA Hons MA, RAW.Dip., V.A.I., MA)

Has 15 years of first-class expertise in the field of clinical nutrition and functional medicine. Her areas of expertise include prostate cancer, diseases of the urinary and the reproductive tract, cardiovascular problems and leukaemia. Cristina has written and lectured extensively on a wide range of health matters and she is a regular contributor to various nutritional and medical journals.

Michael van Straten (DO, ND, DipAc.)

Qualified osteopath, naturopath and acupuncturist, with a special interest in nutritional therapy, women's problems, hypertension, heart disease and ME.

He has written 40 books including the international bestsellers *Super Juice* and *Super Herbs*. He also appears regularly on television.

There is still much uncertainty over what causes chronic hives, although there appears to be a close link to the immune system and the condition may be related to an underlying autoimmune disorder, such as thyroid disease or lupus. Allergic reactions are also thought to play a role.

The study, which was carried out by Dr. Jill Poole and her fellow researchers at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, looked at the role of vitamin D3 as a supplemental treatment for chronic hives. Past research suggests there may be an association between low vitamin D levels and outbreaks of urticaria.

Over 12 weeks, 38 study participants took a triple-drug combination of allergy medications (one prescription and two over-the-counter drugs) and one vitamin D3 supplement each day. Half of the patient's took 600 IUs of vitamin D3 and the other half took 4,000 IUs.

Researchers found after just one week that the severity of patients' symptoms decreased by 33 per cent for both groups. But at the end of three months, the group taking 4,000 IUs of vitamin D3 had a further 40 per cent decrease in the severity of their hives. The low vitamin D3 treatment group experienced no further improvements after the first week. The researchers believe the difference likely has something to do with vitamin D3's regulation of the immune system.

Commenting on the findings, Dr. Poole said: "We consider the results in patients a significant improvement. This higher dosing of readily available vitamin D3 shows promise without adverse effects. Vitamin D3 could be considered a safe and potentially beneficial therapy.

"It was not a cure, but it showed benefit when added to anti-allergy medications. Patients taking the higher dose had less severe hives – they didn't have as many hives and had a decrease in the number of days a week they had hives."

In the study, patients had suffered from five to 20 years with severe hives. Some had been on therapy and others none.

As Dr. Poole points out: "Standard therapy is to control symptoms with antihistamines and other allergy medications. Some are costly and can pose substantial side effects." In addition, antihistamines do nothing to get to the root cause of the problem.

The researchers are now considering conducting a larger study. Hopefully these promising results will also prompt research into an all-natural treatment approach involving vitamin D3.

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