Fat Fighting Herbs & Supplements

Herbs, Vitamins & Minerals That Make You Thin

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Choline

Choline is an essential precursor of acetylcholine, a stimulatory neurotransmitter. Choline can be found in certain foods, such as green leafy vegetables, soybeans, wheat germ, egg yolk, beef, liver, fish, brewer's yeast and lecithin. It is also available in supplement form in tablets and capsules.

Choline's Fat Fighting Benefits

Choline, which is included in the Vitamin B complex as acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter, is an essential nutrient the body needs to produce compounds necessary for healthy cell membranes. This includes acetylcholine, a crucial brain chemical that is involved in memory. Using choline supplements hemps improve brain functions, like short-term memory, concentration and learning capacity, especially in elderly individuals. Choline thus offers benefits to persons suffering from Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, and age-related cognitive decline (also known as ARCD). Choline also helps in transmitting impulses. Choline has also shown improvement in tested individuals suffering from bipolar disorder (also known as manic depression).

In particular, choline helps form the phospholipid of cell membranes called phosphatidylcholine. Phospholipids, like omega-3 fatty acids, are important for a healthy brain.

In the human body, choline transports lipids from the liver. It also forms betaine, which is a methyl donor that is important. Choline helps to prevent fat accumulation in the liver. It prevents cirrhosis from developing in the liver as well as protects against degenerative kidney disease.

For your fat burning eating regime, choline is important because of its ability to help produce lipotropic agents which metabolize fat and protein. Choline also

helps produce the good cholesterol, or LDL, the body needs. And choline prevents the elevation of bad cholesterol or HDL through reduction of dangerously high homocysteine levels. Choline thus helps to prevent thrombosis and atherosclerosis.

Recent studies of choline have shown that it may play a role in your mood functions, your perception of pain as well as alertness. This means choline makes you feel more alert and aware. Some studies report choline positively affects the male sexual response mechanism.

Choline is also essential for normal muscle functioning, particularly after strenuous exercise. Bodybuilders or persons who perform rigorous strength training often require choline supplements. Choline is also essential for growth.

Choline deficiency can be a very serious condition which manifests itself in these symptoms: fatty liver, neurologic disease, liver cirrhosis or hemorrhagic degeneration of the heart, lungs, adrenals and kidneys.

How To Take Choline

Although choline is found in certain foods, a choline supplement is an easy to use alternative and a quick way to ensure that you have adequate amounts of choline in your body.

Choline is available from a number of supplement manufacturers in forms that include choline bitartate, choline chloride and choline citrate.

Take choline a few minutes before breakfast or lunch, or as indicated by your doctor.

How Much To Take

The amount to take daily varies between 250-500 milligrams. Make sure you don't over supplement with choline! Megadoses above 6,000 milligrams can result in dizziness, vomiting and nausea.

Chromium Picolinate

Chromium picolinate is a dietary supplement that has proven useful in helping to suppress appetite and food cravings.

It is widely available in health food and vitamin stores, as well as most supermarkets and grocery stores.

Chromium Picolinate's Fat Fighting Benefits

Chromium is an essential part of the human glucose tolerance factor, or GTF, which is important in the body's regulation of blood sugar necessary for proper metabolism of fat and protein.

Supplementing with chromium (like chromium picolinate) may help persons with type 2 diabetes. The supplement has shown the ability to reduce harmful heart rhythm, and thus lower risk of cardiovascular disease among type 2 diabetics. The FDA issued a decision letter in August 2005 which indicated that a small study they conducted suggested that chromium picolinate may reduce the risk of insulin resistance, and may lead to a reduction in the risk of type 2 diabetes. Although the FDA went on to say that the relationship between chromium picolinate and insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes was highly uncertain, there are other more recent studies which suggest there is a relationship, and a beneficial one at that.

An August 2006 study showed that persons with type 2 diabetes who supplemented with chromium picolinate were better able to control their blood sugar

and avoid weight gain. They showed improvement in long-term blood sugar control, insulin sensitivity, gained less weight and body fat than study participants on medication alone.

Chromium picolinate supplementation may also be useful in curbing food cravings, particularly cravings for carbohydrates. Appetite-related symptoms such as overpowering urges to consume sweets and sugars seemed to be helped by supplementing with chromium picolinate, according to another study of 113 people suffering from atypical depression associated with food cravings. The authors of the study concluded that the chromium picolinate supplements improved the ability of the body to use insulin, which is the key hormonal regulator of blood sugar, and thus led to reduction in food cravings.

In the human body, chromium is a mineral that is intricately involved in metabolism of carbohydrate and fat. Persons with low levels of chromium in the body, or chromium deficiency, may be an increased risk of a heart attack. Chromium also lowers high blood pressure.

Chromium picolinate also benefits the muscles and energy production and is particularly important for individuals who exercise strenuously (rigorous exercise depletes chromium in the body).

How To Take Chromium Picolinate

Chromium supplementation is available in chromium picolinate, chromium chloride, chromium nicotinate and high-chromium yeast. Chromium picolinate and chromium nicotinate are more easily absorbed by the body than the other types of chromium supplementation. There have been many studies of chromium, but chromium picolinate is the one form that has garnered the most attention from researchers.

Food sources of chromium include whole grains, apples and broccoli. Avoid consumption of sugar, which depletes chromium in the body.

In supplement form, chromium picolinate is available as a standalone supplement (100-200 mcg) or as part of a multivitamin.

How Much To Take

Take between 50-200 micrograms of chromium picolinate a day. The National Research Council has set a recommended dietary allowance of 50-200 mcg per day.

Magnesium

Magnesium is a mineral that's essential to the human body as well as a number of biologic functions. Only about 25 grams of magnesium in total is found in an adult human, and 50-60% of it is located in the bones.

Since most Americans (90%) don't have adequate magnesium, it's important to take the mineral as a daily supplement.

Magnesium supplements are widely available from a number of manufacturers.

Magnesium's Fat Fighting Benefits

Magnesium is a mineral involved in more than 300 enzymatic reactions in the human body. In fact, magnesium is required for all major biological processes in the body. These include energy production (cellular) and synthesizing of nucleic acids and proteins. Magnesium is crucial in helping to regulate the heart's neuromuscular activity and maintaining a normal heart rhythm. It's also important in the body's ability to convert blood sugar into energy, metabolize calcium and Vitamin C properly.

Insufficient magnesium may result in heart spasms, nervousness, confusion, kidney stones and calcium depletion. More than 90% of Americans aren't getting enough magnesium from their daily food intake alone. You may be magnesium deficient if you experience any of the following symptoms of magnesium

deficiency: leg cramps, fatigue, migraines, loss of appetite, depression, high blood pressure, nausea or vomiting.

Magnesium plays a huge part in keeping bones healthy and strong. Women and growing children can particularly benefit from magnesium supplementation. In women, magnesium can help relieve menopausal and premenstrual syndrome (or PMS), as well as help reduce the risk of premature labor. Pregnant women, who are retaining water, have high blood pressure or protein in their urine (a condition known as pre-eclampsia) may benefit from taking magnesium supplements.

There are studies that report that people with chronic fatigue syndrome may show improvement with a magnesium supplement.

Diabetics, who as a rule tend to have lower than optimum magnesium levels in their bodies, may also benefit from taking magnesium in supplement form.

And magnesium may also help with other problems such as control of the bladder in women and in the dehydration of red blood cells (found in sickle cell anemia patients).

How To Prepare Magnesium

It's best to start off with magnesium supplementation in small doses, taken regularly. Take with a full glass of water in order to avoid diarrhea. Of course, you should check with your doctor before you begin taking magnesium or any supplements, as certain conditions may prompt him or her to suggest you not take the supplement.

Generally speaking, you should also take either a multivitamin or B-vitamin complex along with the magnesium supplement. This is due to the fact that the level of Vitamin B6 in the body affects how much of the magnesium gets absorbed into the body's cells.

How Much To Take

Various amounts of magnesium supplements are recommended for people depending on age and gender. For males who are 19-30 years old, daily recommended intake is 400 mg, males 31 and over, 420 mg. For females 19-30, the dosage recommended per day is 310 mg, and for women 31 and older, it's 320 mg. Note that females' magnesium requirements may increase during pregnancy. In any individual, the requirements may increase due to athletic training, during high protein synthesis (like pregnancy), or recovering from various illnesses. Check with your doctor regarding your correct recommended magnesium supplement dosage.

Spirulina

Spirulina, with its funny sounding name, is also known as blue-green algae. That's because it comes from blue-green algae that grows in most lakes and ponds. Spirulina is actually an organism that thrives in the more alkaline environment of freshwater lakes and ponds. It is a vitamin-rich herb that's used as a supplement for dietary reasons.

Spirulina is available in health food stores and vitamin shops, as well as many grocery stores and supermarkets. It comes in capsules, powders, flakes and tablets.

Spirulina's Fat Fighting Benefits

Spirulina is widely used as a nutrient powerhouse, a supplement that provides an excellent addition to diets, especially for persons who are vegetarian. Spirulina is actually a better source of protein than either beef or soybeans. And, spirulina is one of the few non-animal sources of Vitamin B12, also found in beef liver. Other essential vitamins in spirulina include Vitamin A and Vitamin E,

along with essential amino acids and minerals including potassium, calcium, zinc, magnesium, selenium, phosphorus and iron.

The list of essential amino acids in spirulina is extensive. It includes: arginine, histidine, aspartic and glutamic acid, tyrosine, alanine, valine, leucine, isoleucine, phenylalanine, Threonine, tryptophan, methionine, proline, cysteine, serine and lysine.

As a superfood, spirulina's amino acids are a wonderful boost to your fat-burning diet. Tryptophan in spirulina helps you combat cravings for sugar and guards against obesity Phenylalanine acts as an appetite suppressant. Tyrosine is helpful in lowering blood pressure, assisting with reducing stress and guarding against obesity. Methionine helps with fluid balance in the body as well as improving immune response and protecting against heavy metals, drugs, chemicals and alcohol and fatty liver deposits. Threonine boosts the immune system as well as helping with digestion and normal growth of bone, skin and muscle tissue. Cysteine combats depression, detoxifies the liver, and offers anti-cancer and anti-aging benefits. Aspartic and glutamic acids in spirulina assist in proving increased energy and stamina, helping with digestive enzymes, and stabilizing sugar cravings. Leucine and isoleucine help combat low blood sugar and promote muscle building and wound healing. Valine also helps low blood sugar. Alanine helps produce energy from glucose and lowers high blood cholesterol.

It is low-fat, low calorie and cholesterol-free. In addition, spirulina contains complex sugars, trace elements and enzymes. All of these the body can easily absorb from spirulina. Green chlorophyll and blue phycocyanin pigments in spirulina's cellular structure (these give spirulina its blue-green coloring) help detoxify the human liver. The liver may be protected against cirrhosis and hepatitis with spirulina supplementation.

The gamma-linoleic acid or GLA, which is a fatty acid, in spirulina helps promote a healthy heart. And spirulina's high protein concentration, nutrients and

amino acids are helpful for individuals involved in strenuous or rigorous exercise or sports.

Spirulina assists your fat burning eating routine because it helps the digestive tract by promoting acidophilus growth. Acidoplilus is bacteria your body needs in order to break down foods.

But among spirulina's best known benefits is its ability to boost immune system functioning, as well as its ability to prevent and help treat various forms of cancer. Its cancer-fighting abilities are particularly impressive, since spirulina stimulates the body's natural killer cells that fight off illness and actually destroy cancerous cells. An Indian study found that spirulina participants with mouth cancer enjoyed a complete remission of the disease. Other studies have reported potential for spirulina to combat HIV, herpes and influenza.

Spirulina contains beta carotene, zeaxanthin and phycocyanin, which act as potent antioxidants. These protect the human body from the harmful effects of free radicals. Its anti-inflammatory properties may also be beneficial for those suffering from rheumatoid arthritis and diabetic neuropathy. Its beneficial effects extend to being able to lower triglycerides in plasma and increase the HDL or good cholesterol.

How To Prepare Spirulina

Spirulina should be kept in a cool, dry place. But it can survive at high temperatures without losing any of its nutrients.

Spirulina supplements can be taken in powder form, tablets and as drinks marketed as spirulina drinks.

There are generally no side effects reported with spirulina supplementation, although some persons experience light headache, muscle pain, sweating and flushing. There are no food, herb or medication interactions known. However, individuals with allergic reactions to spirulina should avoid taking spirulina.

Be sure to purchase spirulina from only qualified, highly reputable manufacturers. This is to avoid any contamination from heavy metals from potentially toxic sources (since spirulina grown in water that contains heavy metals will concentrate the toxin).

How Much To Take

Typical daily dosage ranges from 250 milligrams to 5 grams. Some people take 1 gram two times per day (on physician's recommendation) with meals as a means of fighting off diabetes. For fat burning consideration, 200 milligrams can be taken three times per day right before meals.

Wheatgrass

Wheatgrass is an herb that is organically grown and processed with controlled heat. Wheatgrass supplements have varying amounts of vitamins, minerals, protein, antioxidants and enzymes the body needs for normal and healthy functioning of digestive and metabolic balance and healthy blood.

Wheatgrass is widely available in vitamin and health food stores, and in most supermarkets and grocery stores.

Wheatgrass' Fat Fighting Benefits

Wheatgrass has no fat or cholesterol and contains one gram of protein per teaspoonful, along with eight essential amino acids and many other vitamins and minerals.

Wheatgrass supplementation has its adherents who believe it helps support the immune system and lower cholesterol. It's easy to see why this may be true. Just look at all the nutrients, essential amino acids and vitamins wheatgrass contains.

Vitamin A, Vitamin B2, Vitamins C, D and K, along with calcium, potassium and iron also provide benefits to the body. Vitamin A provides infection protection and also helps improve vision. Vitamin B2 (or riboflavin) boosts energy production from foods as well as promotes normal growth. Vitamin C is important for cardiovascular health, healing wounds and building collagen from connective tissues, along with immunity boosts. Vitamin K promotes bone health and blood functioning. Vitamin D both promotes calcium absorption as well as maintains proper levels of calcium. Potassium is necessary for proper fluid balance in the body. Calcium helps blood to clot properly, is necessary for the growth of strong teeth and bones, healthy muscle contractions and nerve cell transmission. Iron stimulates the production of hemoglobin, the red blood cells that transport oxygen from the lungs to all body parts.

The fact is that supplementing with wheat grass may help strengthen your immune system, reduce the likelihood of certain cancers, and improve energy levels and a number of other potential health benefits. Wheatgrass helps to detoxify the liver and oxygenate the blood. This helps increase circulation, boosts energy levels and improves immune system functioning. The chlorophyll and its phytonutrients of amino acids, fiber, vitamins, minerals, enzymes and protein all work in concert to provide immune system strength.

Wheatgrass also improves digestion, wound healing, blood purification, increases production of hemoglobin (from its iron content), and removes heavy metals from the body.

How To Prepare Wheatgrass

Wheatgrass is too strong for most people to consume as a “shot.” And you can’t eat it straight because of its fibrous nature that makes it too difficult for our intestines. However, it’s easy to take wheatgrass in juice. In fact, that’s how most people use wheatgrass. Within 20 minutes of consuming your wheatgrass juice, your body absorbs and digests all its nutrients. Talk about quick energy!

One popular combination is wheatgrass, garlic and ginger. This helps your body, although it may give you bad breath. Combat that with the addition of a follow-up drink of freshly juiced apples or carrots. Add celery, a natural breath freshener, and this will counteract the odor-producing effect of a wheatgrass shot.

How Much To Take

Normal recommended daily dosage is one tablet of 500 milligrams twice per day before eating (or as your doctor recommends). Wheatgrass is also available in powder form that you can add to juice, as well as wheatgrass juice.

Zinc

Zinc is an essential mineral that is in almost every cell of the human body, which requires zinc for cell division, growth, wound healing and many other bodily functions.

As a supplement, zinc is available in many different forms, including zinc picolinate, zinc aspartate, zinc oxide, zinc gluconate, zinc citrate, zinc monomethionine and zinc histidine. Zinc chelate is probably one of the most absorbable and effective of the zinc supplements available.

Zinc supplements are available in health food and vitamin stores, along with most supermarkets and grocery stores.

Zinc's Fat Fighting Benefits

Zinc, an essential nutrient, is involved in a great number of the body's metabolic activities. Zinc stimulates activity in approximately 100 enzymes. These are substances that help promote biochemical bodily reactions.

Although zinc is prevalent in the human body, many people take and need zinc supplementation. Zinc can help fight off colds and symptoms of the flu, like sore throats and achiness, as well as promote healing in the body. Zinc helps to

strengthen the body's immune system which acts as the body's defender against disease and infection.

Zinc's antioxidant properties help protect the human body from the dangerous free radicals roaming about. It helps guard against cardiovascular disease and stroke, and helps improve vision (particularly night blindness, which may be a result of zinc deficiency).

Zinc is also necessary for the proper growth and development of hair, production of insulin, as well as fertility, the sense of smell and taste.

When a person suffers from zinc deficiency, it manifests itself in the following symptoms: loss of hair and appetite, eye and skin lesions, impotence and delayed sexual maturation, slow growth and diarrhea. Zinc deficiency is prompted by alcoholism, insufficient daily caloric intake, and various diseases of the digestive tract. Because vegetarians have a lower absorption of zinc from plant foods, they may need 50% more zinc than non-vegetarian eaters.

In pregnant mothers, zinc deficiency can have negative effects on the growth of the fetus. Diarrhea also causes loss of zinc in the human body.

How To Prepare Zinc

Zinc is available in many different forms and types. These include liquid, capsules, lozenges and tablets. It is best when taken just before bed, so as not to interfere with food. Make sure to take it 8 hours after taking any iron supplements.

Many multivitamins contain zinc, but due to its counteraction with food, it's better to take zinc as a standalone supplement.

How Much To Take

A normal daily dosage of zinc supplementation is about 15 milligrams. You may take 50 milligrams per day during pregnancy if your doctor recommends it. Even dosages of up to 200 milligrams per day is considered safe, but not for

long periods. For lengthy usage, you should stick to 15-20 milligrams of zinc per day.