

Bioflavonoids: Boost Your Brain and Circulatory Health

What are bioflavonoids? No, it's not an annoying mascot for a pizza chain. It's not the latest race of alien beings from a new science fiction series, either. They are actually the natural pigments found in many different fruits and vegetables. Science is discovering that they may have numerous health benefits when it comes to brain function and the overall health of your circulatory system.

Bioflavonoids are most commonly praised for their antioxidant properties. They were first identified in the 1930's by Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, Ph.D., a Nobel laureate. They are thought to prevent the breakdown of vitamin C in the body, and they also boast their own antioxidant capabilities. Over 5000 different bioflavonoids have been identified in nature. They are classified into categories including flavones, anthocyanidins, flavones, flavonols, isoflavones and flavans. Science is still discovering new types and their healing properties every day. The best part about them is that they are all natural and very powerful.

For example, scientists have been promoting the amazing benefits of the antioxidant found in dark chocolate. It is called epicatechin, and it is an excellent bioflavonoid for heart health. Studies show that it helps maintain healthy blood vessels. Antioxidants in dark chocolate are also believed to lower high blood pressure, according to a study published in the Aug. 27, 2003 edition of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Rutin and quercetin, both found in red grapes, are also linked with a healthier circulatory system. A study conducted at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1995 found that "the antioxidant and platelet inhibitory properties of other naturally occurring compounds in the wine the consumption of flavonoid-containing foods and beverages may retard atherogenesis and prevent thrombosis on a daily basis." Translated into common terms, the researchers concluded that bioflavonoid may slow artery and vein degeneration and prevent blood clotting.

The American Heart Association feels that this area of research is very promising. Their website states, "Phytochemicals are chemicals found in plants. Plant sterols, flavonoids and sulfur-containing compounds are three classes of micronutrients found in fruits and vegetables. These compounds may be important in reducing the risk of atherosclerosis, which is the buildup of fatty deposits in artery walls."

As far as healthy brain function is concerned, bioflavonoid is thought to help with microcirculation in small vessels throughout the body. You might recall seeing ginkgo biloba in the news. It has been shown to improve memory with its powerful bioflavonoid in numerous studies. What makes ginkgo especially significant is that its bioflavonoids have a stronger potency than many other bioflavonoids, and it seems to have specific benefits in the capillary beds of the brain.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information recently reported the following on their website: "Flavonoids were shown to activate key enzymes in mitochondrial respiration and to protect neuronal cells by acting as antioxidants, thus breaking the vicious cycle of oxidative stress and tissue damage. Furthermore, recent data indicate a favorable effect of flavonoids on neuro-inflammatory events." In other words, bioflavonoid is thought to help protect your brain cells from degeneration, and recent data shows that they may also reduce swelling.

Researchers are eager to discover all the healing properties bioflavonoids possess. Modern medicine is now faced with an all natural group of chemicals found in plant pigments that may prove to be effective in preserving brain function and promoting cardiovascular health. This is fantastic news for people that prefer natural supplements over expensive prescription pills. Current research shows that these chemicals have significant powers for enhancing overall health. In fact, many researchers advocate including bioflavonoid supplements in your daily health maintenance plan.

About the Author

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