Garlic Fights Deadly Hypertension

Bad breath may be the price to pay for warding off high blood pressure in the lungs. According to research on rats, an ingredient in garlic was found to prevent pulmonary hypertension, a potentially deadly type of high blood pressure in the arteries that bring blood to the lungs.

The magic ingredient: Allicin.

Researchers explain the garlic ingredient allicin likely prevents pulmonary hypertension by causing the constricted blood vessels to relax, and by preventing damage to the blood vessels.

Positive, Preventative Effects of Allicin

To determine the ingredient's preventative effects, scientists first increased the risk of pulmonary hypertension in rats using a drug that triggers the constriction of the arteries feeding the lungs.

Some of the rats were given a powdered form of garlic that contained allicin; others ate boiled garlic that was void of the ingredient (it dissipates when exposed to heat through boiling). After three weeks, researchers found:

• High blood pressure in the lungs was prevented in the rats that received allicin.

• Rats that ate the boiled garlic developed pulmonary hypertension, proving allicin as the key ingredient.

How Will These Findings Affect Humans?

For humans, pulmonary hypertension can lead to potentially fatal complications in the heart and blood vessels. And while consuming two cloves of garlic every day would equal that of the rats' dosage in the experiment, additional research needs to be done before doctors are able to recommend garlic to patients who have an increased risk of pulmonary hypertension.

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Dr. Mercola's Comment:

Garlic is truly one of nature's most impressive foods and I am a big fan of it. Having antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties, along with a host of additional health-promoting characteristics, the benefits you can gain from garlic seem quite profound.

A great deal of research has been done on garlic, but the findings summarized in this research are new and provide some exciting news for those of you who may be suffering from pulmonary hypertension. If you are not familiar with the symptoms of this condition, they include:

• Shortness of breath (dyspnea)
• Fatigue
• Dizziness or fainting spells (syncope)
• Chest pressure or pain
• Swelling (edema) in your ankles, legs and eventually in your abdomen
• Bluish color to your lips and skin (cyanosis)
• Racing pulse or increased heart rate
Although primary pulmonary hypertension is a rare disorder with no known cause, secondary pulmonary hypertension (hypertension in the lungs caused by another problem in the body) is fairly common.

Secondary pulmonary hypertension is caused by a number of different lung disorders, including congestive heart failure, emphysema and sleep apnea.

Conditions such as these are often related to poor dietary and lifestyle choices, and thus are largely preventable.

Eating fresh garlic on a regular basis and following my Total Health Program would provide a powerful combination in the prevention and treatment of pulmonary hypertension.

**Fresh Garlic – The Best Form to Use**

Perhaps the most important notion supported by the research reviewed here is that only fresh garlic works.

Allicin, the active ingredient in garlic discussed here, is destroyed within one hour of smashing the garlic. This means that garlic pills are virtually worthless and should not be used.

Instead, when you use the garlic, compress it with a spoon prior to swallowing it, or put it through your juicer to add to vegetable juice. Just be careful not to put too much as raw garlic has a powerful flavor and can cause some unpleasant surprises. A single medium size clove or two is usually sufficient.

I am not a big fan of supplements, as I believe nutrients found in their natural state, i.e. food, are more beneficial to us than supplements containing isolated or synthetic nutrients.

It seems as if everyday new research comes out proving food is better, and the study discussed here continues that trend.