Dynamic Chiropractic

VITAMINS / SUPPLEMENTS

Vitamin C and Recovery

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It is no secret that adequate vitamin C is critical for a host of physiologic functions, including wound healing; collagen synthesis; immune response; adrenal function; blood vessel health; antioxidant regeneration; and free radical neutralization, to name a few.

In a recent study,[1] two weeks of vitamin C supplementation reduced soreness and shortened muscle function recovery time. Volunteers consumed 200 mg of vitamin C twice a day (400 mg total), or a placebo for two weeks. They then stopped the supplement 36 hours prior to a test that included 90 minutes of variable-intensity 20-meter runs, which all of the subjects in both groups were unaccustomed to. The authors were unsure whether the vitamin C group's reduced soreness and improved recovery were caused by a decrease in tissue damage, and subsequent inflammation or a reduction of intracellular oxidative stress.

Comment

I feel that there are some legitimate extrapolations for chiropractors from this study. Think about how many patients come into our offices in pain after performing tasks, activities, sports, and exercises they are unaccustomed to. Now think about how often these events were planned, for example, "In two weeks we are moving," "Softball season starts next month," "Inventory is coming up," etc.

Most of us try to be proactive with our patients and counsel them on ways to stay out of our offices. For example, how often do we ask patients to lose a few pounds, do some stretches, warm up properly, and exercise regularly? We also realize that compliance is an ongoing issue, but even our most unmotivated patients could probably be convinced to take the vitamin C that is sitting on their shelves before they paint the entire house in one day. They will probably still come into our offices stiff and sore, but by preloading the vitamin C, we can help them heal with fewer treatments.

1. Thompson D, William C, McGregor S, et al. Prolonged vitamin C supplementation and recovery from demanding exercise. *International Journal of Sport, Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism* 2001;11(4):466-481.

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