

+ *Savouring organic summer wines*

alive

CANADA'S NATURAL HEALTH
AND WELLNESS MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2008

KIDS

- VITAMINS
- Wii WORKOUT
- PLAYTIME PRIORITY
- TOO OLD, TOO FAST?

A WEEK OF
SCHOOL LUNCHES
(Pack'em green)

FENNEL
DELICIOUS &
MEDICINAL

**SOOKE
HARBOUR HOUSE**

Wild chanterelle mushroom soup
Sockeye salmon and sautéed vegetables
Sweet pumpkin ice milk

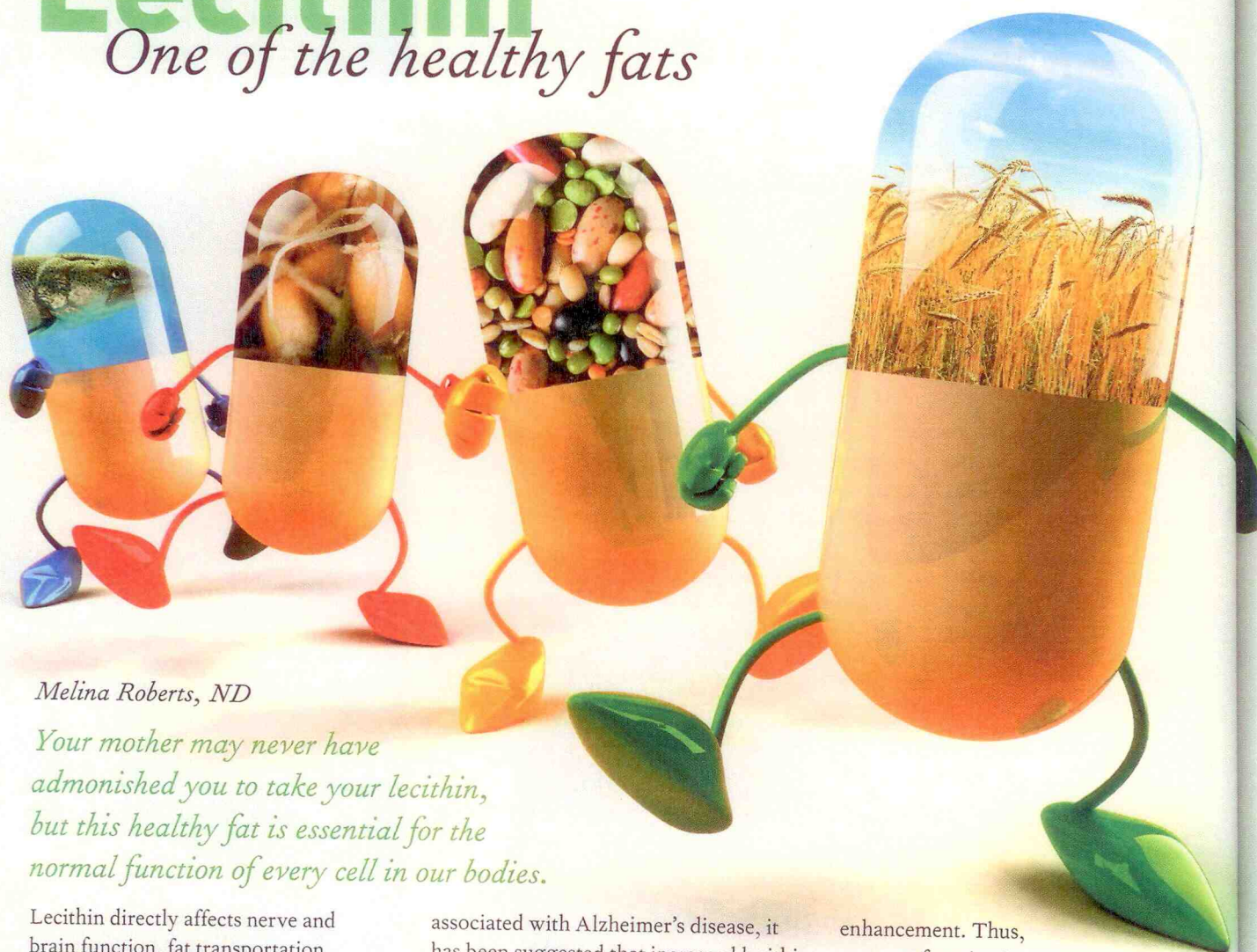
**SILKEN
LAUMANN**
ACTIVE KIDS
MOVEMENT

**NATURAL
SKIN CARE
SOLUTIONS**

Gabrielle Miller
A Natural Passion for Life

Lecithin

One of the healthy fats



Melina Roberts, ND

Your mother may never have admonished you to take your lecithin, but this healthy fat is essential for the normal function of every cell in our bodies.

Lecithin directly affects nerve and brain function, fat transportation, and metabolism, and protects cells from oxidation. Lecithin contains a phospholipid called phosphatidylcholine, which is absorbed by the intestinal mucosa and metabolized to choline in the liver.

Small amounts of choline are carried to the brain, where it is converted to the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which is required for adequate nerve function as well as for memory storage and retrieval.

MEMORY HELPER

In healthy individuals, lecithin can increase acetylcholine levels in the brain. Because a decrease in acetylcholine is

associated with Alzheimer's disease, it has been suggested that increased lecithin levels may increase this important neurotransmitter.

As a 2002 study reported in the *Clinical Therapeutics* journal, while patients with mild to moderate dementia experienced improved memory with increased dietary choline, it was not beneficial to patients with advanced Alzheimer's disease.

Studies have shown that choline is also needed for the normal development of the brain during fetal growth. In an interesting animal study, when pregnant female rodents were supplemented with choline, their offspring's brain function changed, resulting in lifelong memory

enhancement. Thus, memory function in the aged offspring was partially determined by what the mother ate during pregnancy.

HEART HEALTH

Lecithin has been shown to help with cardiovascular disease by lowering cholesterol and preventing atherosclerosis. Lecithin is an emulsifying agent, meaning that it is able to suspend the fat and cholesterol that is travelling through the bloodstream and stop it from attaching to the artery walls, thus preventing atherosclerosis.

Some studies demonstrate that soy-derived lecithin has significant effects on

Cautions

It is important to note that lecithin does have potential side effects and interactions with medications; therefore it is recommended that you consult with a licensed health care practitioner before taking lecithin.

lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels, while increasing HDL cholesterol, the good cholesterol, in the blood.

BRAIN FUNCTION

There is evidence that bipolar disorder is associated with reduced choline in the central nervous system.

Supplementing with lecithin has been shown to result in significant improvement and stabilization of mood during hypermanic phases; however it has also been reported to depress mood, so its use for mood disorders should be monitored by a qualified health practitioner.

GALLSTONE PREVENTION

Lecithin may play a role in preventing gallstones from forming. Studies have shown that taking lecithin orally will increase the amount of lecithin in the bile, and this can increase the ability to dissolve cholesterol.

Since gallstones are mostly composed of cholesterol, reducing excess cholesterol may help to reduce the formation of gallstones. Unfortunately, lecithin has not been shown to aid in dissolving gallstones after they have formed.

WEIGHT LOSS

Since lecithin is able to package fat in the bloodstream and eliminate it from the body, it is often suggested that lecithin can help with weight loss, but this does not mean that lecithin is able to flush out fat from our subcutaneous tissues. To date, there is no clear evidence that lecithin aids in weight loss.

GETTING LECITHIN

Lecithin is found naturally in such foods as egg yolk, soybeans, grains, wheat germ, fish, and legumes. When the diet is not adequate, lecithin can safely be consumed as a supplement; since it can be completely metabolized, it is virtually nontoxic to humans. A standard dose of lecithin is one to three grams per day. **a**

Melina Roberts, ND, practises in Calgary, Alberta. Her clinical focus includes detoxification, chronic disease, digestive disorders, women's health, and cancer. melinaroberts.com

The King of Super Foods

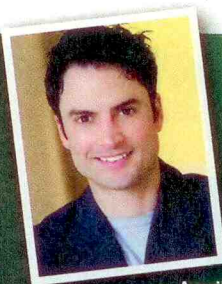


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