



# Natural Standard

The Authority on Integrative Medicine

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**Natural Standard** provides high quality, evidence-based information about complementary and alternative therapies. For more information, please visit [www.naturalstandard.com](http://www.naturalstandard.com).

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## NIH Funds Botanical Research Centers



The [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) will provide five-year grants for five botanical research centers. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) and the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS), two offices within the NIH, will sponsor the centers. Their decision comes after the 2002 National Health Interview Survey discovered that 38.2 million Americans use natural products. Improved funding will allow for larger, more comprehensive trials in a larger variety of fields with a larger variety of supplements.

The grant will fund \$6 million for the Botanical Center for Age-Related Diseases, a project involving Purdue University, University of Alabama at Birmingham and Rutgers University. Researchers will examine the effects of polyphenols (soy protein, green tea and kudzu) on the ability to prevent and treat conditions associated with aging, including osteoporosis, cognitive decline and cataracts.

An additional \$5 million will go towards the Botanical Dietary Supplements for Women's Health program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The facility will continue studies on black cohosh, hops, chasteberry and red clover for relief of premenstrual and menopausal symptoms. Researchers will also start studies on standardization, toxicity and metabolism of botanicals.

Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Louisiana State University System and the Center of Agriculture and the Environment of Rutgers University will work off a \$7.5 million stipend to study how botanical products influence metabolic syndromes. Research will focus on the effects of shilianhua, extracts of Russian tarragon and grape seed on conditions such as obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) Research Center for Botanical Immunomodulators will have an international team that includes MSKCC, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, The Rockefeller University and the Institute of Chinese Medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong to investigate the botanicals' effect on immune function in order to help fight cancer and other diseases. Researchers will study echinacea, astragalus, turmeric, maitake and traditional Chinese formulas.

The final team will include Wake Forest and Harvard Universities, forming the Wake Forest and Harvard Center for Botanical Lipids, who will receive \$7.5 million. The group will study biological mechanisms and clinical applications of polyunsaturated fatty acids derived from botanicals and their possible anti-inflammatory actions. The studies will help determine whether flaxseed, echium and borage are effective in treating and preventing diseases like atherosclerosis and asthma.

## Exercise In Breast Cancer



A study from The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command's breast cancer research program found that physical activity after breast cancer treatments may speed healing time.

Breast cancer patients who exercised with a personal trainer after treatment had boosted immune systems and were stronger than women who rested while recovering. Exercising may help reverse some of the cell damage caused by chemotherapy and radiation therapies. The trial involved breast cancer patients between the ages of 29 and 71. Twenty-eight of the participants exercised regularly with a trainer while 21 continued an inactive lifestyle. The women in the exercise group did 15-20 minutes of strength training with exercise bands and 15-20 minutes of aerobic exercise. Participants filled out health questionnaires and exercisers scored an average of 101.4 while non-exercisers scored around 93.9.

The results were published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology and showed that exercise helped lower inflammatory agents in the blood including interleukin six and gamma interferon. Both are increased as a result of chemotherapy. The immune system was also boosted by a quicker rate of CD4 helper T-cell division.

Another breast cancer study found that exercise may have beneficial effects on C-reactive protein and other cardiovascular risk factors in postmenopausal breast cancer survivors. The results were published in the May 2005 edition of Brain, Behavior, and Immunity ([Click here](#) for the full study).

In an 18-year trial done by Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, 2,987 female RNs diagnosed and successfully treated with stage I, II or III breast cancer were followed. Women who performed the equivalent of walking three-five hours per week had a greater chance of ultimately surviving the disease ([Click here](#) for the full study).

The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command is a program designed to ensure military forces maintain optimal health and provide a quality, cost-effective medical team to be deployed quickly when needed. The programs study infectious diseases, work to improve combat casualty treatments, maintain the health of troops and develop effective biological and chemical defense systems.

## International Integrated Healthcare Expo



Next month exhibitors and alternative healthcare providers around the world will attend the International Integrated Healthcare Expo and Seminar.

The event, which will take place August 19-21, 2005 at the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center in Edison, will focus on ways to integrate both alternative and conventional forms of medicine in healthcare. The spotlight will be on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), ayurveda, acupuncture, Oriental medicine, traditional Chinese medicine and allopathy.

The three-day weekend will include three sessions on integrated healthcare systems and medicinal herbs, five technical sessions on integrated treatments for different diseases and three sessions on safety, efficacy and regulatory issues of the integrated treatment, production and certification of medicinal herbs. There will be trade sessions, poster presentations, lectures, business-to-business meetings, panel discussions and question and answer sessions.

The event is being organized by PDA Trade Fairs, Rutgers University and The Voluntary Health, Education and Rural Development Society (VHERDS).

For more information, please visit <http://www.inhex.com>.

If you would like us to post your event(s) online, please e-mail: [news@naturalstandard.com](mailto:news@naturalstandard.com).

## Scientists Prohibited from Reviewing Drugs



Efforts to keep U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) scientists with financial ties to drug companies from serving on federal advisory committees may be reinforced by a new law proposed by New York Rep. Maurice Hinchey.

Scientists in charge of reviewing the safety and efficacy of drugs would have their affiliations to the industry more closely monitored by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), who support the new bill. The new legislation would prevent scientists from waiving the prohibition on conflicts of interest for scientists on a panel. The law would also separate

the drug safety department from the approval section and make the agency less dependent on fees from drug companies for funding.

Today, many drug researchers have ties to drug companies, presenting a conflict of interest. For example, 10 out of 32 scientists on an advisory panel for arthritis painkillers, called Cox-2 inhibitors, had financial ties to the manufacturers, according to a study by CSPI. Without the scientists' votes, the panel would have voted to recommend removing some of the Cox-2s from the market. According to Hinchey, the proposed bill would help keep only the safest, most effective products on the market by removing chances for industry connected scientists to lobby for the approval of sub-par drugs.

## NACDS Pharmacy Conference



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
CHAIN DRUG STORES

Pharmacists and manufacturers are invited to attend a national trade show and educational forum in San Diego next month. The National Association of Chain Drug

Stores Pharmacy and Technology Conference will feature educational programming, including the latest on pharmacy operations, practice and clinical issues, distribution and marketing.

The conference, which will take place August 27-31, 2005, will include over 300 exhibitors including pharmaceutical manufacturers and technology vendors.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the conference. [Click here](#) to learn how to register.

**Natural Standard** will be attending the event. For more information on the research collaboration, please visit booth #1947.

If you would like us to post your event(s) online, please e-mail: [news@naturalstandard.com](mailto:news@naturalstandard.com)

## Herbs In Pregnancy

Herbal supplements are often used during pregnancy to treat a wide range of conditions, but obstetricians should advise expectant mothers of potential dangers to the fetus. In a recent article published in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. Marcus and his colleagues outlined the



possible dangers of using herbal supplements during pregnancy.

Herbal medications are often perceived as safe because they are natural products that have a long history of use. However, the ingredients are often extremely pure, potent plant extracts that could have dangerous side effects. The growing popularity of alternative therapies requires that medical professionals understand their possible effects.

Herbal medications may produce effects that traditional drugs do not, but some are potentially dangerous. Ginger is a common treatment for morning sickness, but there are reports that usage may lead to abortion, mutations of the fetus, or increased risk of bleeding. Blue cohosh tea is recommended to help induce labor because it causes uterine contractions, but it has been associated with myocardial infarction of the fetus. Species of birthwort are also used in obstetrics even though they contain known nephrotoxins and mutagens. Hellebore is used for nausea and regulating menstruation, hemlock used as a sedative or for cramps and spasms, and tragacanth is used for immune stimulation, yet all are known to be teratogenic in animals. Caution should be taken before administering these and other supplements to patients and should generally be avoided in pregnant patients.

In recent years, the potential dangers of herbs have become apparent with thousands of adverse events reported by users of ephedra supplements for weight loss, liver problems from kava use and renal failures in African folk medicine users. Funding and support is lacking for full-scale testing of these supplements. Therefore, trials are generally small and not comprehensive enough to discover dangers in pregnancy. Reports of dangers come from calls to poison control centers and emergency room visits.

The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994, does not require the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate herbs for content and safety. Under the act, herbs are classified as dietary supplements rather than drugs. Prescription medications are regulated compounds with efficacy, doses and safety tested in numerous clinical trials.

Many services run independent tests to assure that herbal supplements are consistent with their labels. Many supplements are found to have too much or too little specified ingredients. Also, sometimes the complete ingredients, which may include heavy metals or possible toxins, are not reported at all.

For more information on these herbs and conditions, please visit [www.naturalstandard.com](http://www.naturalstandard.com)

Bibliography: Marcus DM, Snodgrass WR. Do no harm: avoidance of herbal medicines during pregnancy. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2005 May;105(5 Pt 1):1119-22. To read the full article, [Click here.](#)

## Protandim: New Antioxidant Therapy



Protandim, a new antioxidant therapy, claims to reduce the signs of aging by rejuvenating the body's natural oxidative defenses.

The product aims to halt and reverse the free radical theory of aging. The company says that as aging occurs there are naturally less of the enzymes that neutralize free radicals allowing them to attack cells and cause health to deteriorate. Studies have shown that the amount of antioxidants needed to stop the process may be too much for our digestive systems to handle. Superoxide Dismutase and Catalase supplements are quickly consumed by the digestive system and are not available to stop the free radicals.

Protandim claims solution to this by forcing the body to naturally manufacture the enzymes on its own. The manufacturers of the product claim that one molecule of these catalytic antioxidants can destroy up to one million free radicals per second and is not consumed during the process. Protandim claims to use biological methods rather than chemical ones to slow the aging process.

In a study conducted by Protandim, 13 human subjects ranging from 20-78 years old received the commercial formulation and had blood tests done at baseline and day 30. Subjects took no other antioxidant supplements, vitamin C and/or vitamin E and/or multivitamins. Lipid peroxidation was analyzed by thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS) levels in the plasma, in general there is an age-dependent increase in TBARS. After 30 days on Protandim, TBARS declined 96 percent in the older subjects and 30 percent in younger subjects. Plasma analyzed for Superoxide Dismutase, Catalase and uric acid showed increases in all three.

Protandim is different from other antioxidant supplements on the market because it triggers the body's system of natural antioxidant enzymes, which neutralize free radicals. Vitamins A, C and E, do not work the same way. Protandim was developed in conjunction with Dr. McCord. In the late 1960's, he discovered Superoxide Dismutase, one of the body's antioxidant enzymes that attacks the free radical. Free radicals are turned into hydrogen peroxide, which is not completely harmless. A second enzyme, catalase, is needed to break it down into water and oxygen. These two enzymes work in combination as the body's first line of defense against free radical damage. The supplement contains calcium and botanical extracts including, milk thistle extract, bacopa extract, ashwagandha, green tea extract and turmeric extract.

For more information, please visit [Protandim](#).

To learn more about herbs, supplements and alternative therapies for aging, please visit [Natural Standard's](#) Condition Center.

## Speech Therapy Aids Stroke Sufferers

New research offers hope for stroke victims suffering from aphasia. Aphasia, which is the inability to understand and communicate words, often occurs after an individual has a stroke. Today, researchers believe intensive speech therapy may improve this condition.

In a small German study, 27 stroke survivors participated in three hours of speech therapy for 10 days. Researchers found that language skills improved in 85 percent of the patients. Before therapy the group, with an average age of 51, had previously experienced four years of speech troubles. Intensive therapy with patients who suffered a stroke years earlier seems to improve their speech. However, the trial needs to be duplicated with a larger group to confirm the results.



In the United States about 700,000 people experience stroke each year. Symptoms include a sudden loss of vision, strength or sensation on one side of the body and a change in language skills. Many stroke sufferers have continuing trouble finding the right words or comprehension. Patients in this study began to improve immediately and continued progress even after six months. Language functions such as naming, repetition, comprehension and written language were tested for quantity and quality. Fifteen of the patients also had reinforcement at home and were sent out to expose themselves to using language in the world. This subset had even more pronounced improvements in speech skills. Intervention post-stroke with speech therapy and recurrent family reinforcement can ultimately boost chances of improving chronic aphasia.

## Inside Natural Standard



**New Team Members:** [Natural Standard](#) is pleased to welcome Wendy Weissner and Nicole Giese as editorial assistants and Scott Wolter who will be joining business development.

**Web site Expands:** **Natural Standard** is constantly expanding the Web site. In addition to launching the new brand name database, 135 monographs have been updated in June. Since January, nearly 300 new items have been added to the herbs and supplements database as well as 50 items to the modalities database.

### Quick Links:

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- [Natural Standard Homepage](#)
- [Natural Standard PDA](#)
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- [Journal of Herbal Pharmacotherapy](#)
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