Krill Oil May Help Boost Lutein Absorption, Company Claims

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Krill supplier Neptune returns to market with new brain, vision formula.

Neptune Technologies & Bioressources (Laval, QC, Canada) is now ready to commercialize NKO Focus, a krill-based brain- and vision-health ingredient first announced last year.

One of NKO Focus’s active ingredients is lutein, and Neptune says that a 2013 human clinical trial showed that the combination of lutein and krill oil may improve lutein absorption up to eightfold. The unpublished 2013 study was a single-dose, randomized, controlled, crossover trial in 10 human subjects aged 20–55 years. Subjects’ plasma lutein levels were measured at baseline and incrementally up to 24 hours after ingestion of either NKO Focus or a comparator product. The comparator product contained equal amounts of lutein esters (6 mg) to NKO Focus.

Fourteen hours after intervention, maximal lutein plasma absorption in NKO Focus subjects was 7.95-fold higher than the comparator subjects, who showed little or no significant change in lutein absorption, Neptune says. The company says this indicates NKO Focus has superior bioavailability over the competitive lutein product. Researchers hypothesized that NKO Focus’s higher content of phospholipids and its antioxidant content help to increase bioavailability of the formula’s ingredients, including lutein. Krill’s phospholipid molecular structure has been shown to allow the body to better absorb krill’s DHA and EPA omega-3 fatty acids—up to 2.5 times, Neptune says—compared to the triglyceride form most common of fish oils, and this may aid absorption of other ingredients as well, the firm says. Lutein—in the form of lutein esters (10%) in NKO Focus—is shown to support vision health. NKO Focus’s other primary ingredients include vitamin A to support healthy vision, as well as thiamine (vitamin B1) to support “mental clarity,” Neptune says. NKO Focus also supports brain health by providing, naturally, 3% of the daily value of choline, which is a precursor to the memory-implicated neurotransmitter acetylcholine, as well as providing the aforementioned DHA and EPA omega-3 fatty acids, which are also shown to support healthy brain function. NKO Focus is one of three condition-specific, krill-based formulas the company is launching since the company returned to production last year following an explosion at its Sherbrooke, Quebec, processing plant in 2012.

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