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**VITAMIN E HELPS MALE ULTRA-MARATHONERS AVOID CELL DAMAGE:
FEMALE ATHLETES CAN RECOVER FROM RACE STRESS WITHOUT IT**

NEW YORK, *January 27, 2005* — Are you thinking of running an ultra-marathon? If so, you might want to include vitamin E in your pre-race prep. According to researchers at the Linus Pauling Institute of Oregon State University, taking vitamin E before such a grueling race may lessen or avert some of the cellular damage it can cause.

As one would expect, an ultra-marathon is a marathon and then some. In Corvallis, Oregon, contestants run up and down 32 miles of steep hills, with an elevation gain and loss of 12,000 feet. Dr. Maret Traber and her group have been working with these runners, investigating the antioxidant effects of vitamin E and whether it can protect the body from oxidative stress caused by such extreme athletics. Dr. Traber is Principal Investigator in the Linus Pauling Institute and Professor in the Department of Nutrition & Exercise Sciences at Oregon State University.

She explains, “The body converts food energy into energy it can use, producing carbon dioxide and water. The process is similar to that of a log burning in a fireplace, you’re burning energy in order to have enough energy to run your body. Energy conversion on the cellular - level is not perfect but it is efficient. But because it’s not perfect, about one percent of energy

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escapes as free radicals like superoxide; a very toxic free radical that contains oxygen and that can initiate all kinds of damage. That's where you get into the damage caused by oxidative stress. We study this on the membrane level.”

The researcher spoke today at a health and science writers' workshop on vitamin E and health, held at the New York Academy of Sciences and sponsored by the Council for Responsible Nutrition. In Dr. Traber's double-blind study, ultra-marathoners took either antioxidant vitamins C and E or placebo daily for 6 weeks, and then were evaluated for oxidative stress on the race morning and every morning for the week after the race. The nutritionist found no increase in cell membrane damage caused by oxidative stress in those runners who took vitamin E, although there was membrane damage in those taking placebo.

What the researchers found most interesting, however, was that although the oxidative stress markers for women on placebo went back to normal two days after the race, men on placebo had elevated oxidative stress markers for a week after the event.

The role that gender played in this study was unexpected. According to Dr. Traber, “Women are better protected from oxidative stress than are men. This was surprising. I wouldn't have guessed that there was a gender difference.”

The nutritionist suggested that men who decide spontaneously to run a marathon and who haven't been training or planning ahead, can really can do some serious injury to their muscles and experience oxidative stress. This is especially true if they haven't had proper nutrition. Taking vitamin E, however, may help them recover sooner.

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Note to Editor: The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973, is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association representing dietary supplement industry ingredient suppliers and manufacturers. CRN members adhere to a strong code of ethics, comply with dosage limits and manufacture dietary supplements to high quality standards under good manufacturing practices. For more information on CRN, visit <http://www.crnusa.org>.