



## Heart-y Nourishment

*Written by Jill Grunewald and published in part in tastebud magazine, Feb. 2008*

### **tastebud**

With overwhelming rates of cardiovascular disease in this country, we've probably all heard the basic tenets of heart health: control your weight, exercise regularly, watch what you eat, drink in moderation, shun cigarettes, and practice stress management. While all are legitimate suggestions, no matter what the condition of your heart, there are often some finer points regarding heart health that many doctors overlook or don't understand.

Cardiovascular disease is a general term encompassing heart attack, stroke, and congestive heart failure. The statistics around heart disease are quite staggering; according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it accounts for more fatalities than all other diseases combined.

Often times, as people age and become more sedentary, good nutrition and supplementation, which are key for warding off degenerative disease, becomes less of a priority. Couple this with little or no cardiovascular activity and risk for heart disease escalates. Our hearts are the most active muscle in our body, and require proper nourishment and regular workouts to keep on keepin' on. This doesn't mean that you need to start training for the next spring marathon. Often times, a 30-minute walk 3 to 5 times a week works wonders for healthier arteries, weight control, and lowering blood pressure.

Cardiovascular disease is often referred to as the "silent disease," as people can possess symptoms that they are unaware of. Here is a simple self-test that, if done regularly, may forewarn you of illness.

A simple pulse test can help you determine how well your heart is functioning. The best time to check your pulse is first thing in the morning. The heart rate should be between 60 and 100 beats per minute. To take your pulse, place the first two fingers of your right hand between the bone and tendon of your left wrist. Count the beats for fifteen seconds, and then multiply by four to find the beats per minute. If your pulse remains rapid, consult your health care provider to rule out problems. A chronically high pulse rate is often a precursor of hypertension. Taken daily, this pulse test can forewarn you of oncoming illness.

[Source: Prescription for Nutritional Healing, Phyllis A. Balch]

Additionally, here are some essential nutrients sure to get your blood flowing, as taken from Balch's book. Better yet, for nine pages of natural heart health information, get your hands on this nutritional bible.

# HEALTHFUL ELEMENTS



Coenzyme Q10	50-100 mg 3x/day	Increases oxygenation of heart tissue, has been shown to prevent heart attack recurrences
Plus Coenzyme A	As directed on label	Can streamline metabolism, increase energy, support adrenal glands, process fats, remove toxins from body, boost immune system, and improve overall physical and mental processes
Essential fatty acids (black currant seed oil, flaxseed oil, primrose oil, PCB-free fish oil)	As directed on label	Helps prevent hardening of the arteries
L-Arginine	As directed on label; take with carbohydrates rather than protein, which inhibits absorption	Improves blood flow
Vitamin C with bioflavonoids and L-lysine	1,000 mg 3x/day	Extremely important as regulator of high blood pressure
Hawthorn, the "herbal heart tonic"	80 mg 2x/day	Strengthens the heart, improves blood flow through heart, pumps antioxidants into blood, lowers blood pressure

Not only will tea (especially green tea) provide a horde of antioxidants; garlic lower cholesterol and triglycerides, reduce blood pressure, and help prevent the clotting of blood that cause heart attack; whole grains provide soluble fiber that helps excrete cholesterol from the body; and beans lower cholesterol, but fat may also be your heart's friend.

# HEALTHFUL ELEMENTS



Saturated fat, a natural fat, has been disparaged in the press as a villainous food that should be banished from the diet. According to Dr. Mary Enig, Ph.D. and nutritionist and biochemist internationally renown for her research on the nutritional aspects of fats and oils, “The idea that saturated fats cause heart disease is completely wrong, but the statement has been ‘published’ so many times...that it is very difficult to convince people otherwise unless they are willing to take the time to read and learn what all the economic and political factors were that produced the anti-saturated fat agenda.”

The key here is not to make a habit of a regular midnight snack of ice cream, but to consume healthy fats found in nuts, moderate amounts of organic dairy, healthy oils, avocados, fish, and grassfed beef, (yes, beef). Not consuming enough dietary fat has actually been shown to lead to overweight conditions, which can be a precursor to cardiovascular disease.

Even if cardiovascular disease runs in your family, don’t take it lying down. With a few preventative measures, good supplementation, and appropriate amounts of heart-healthy foods, you’ll find yourself with one healthy heart.

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