

The Natural Pharmacy Newsletter

Wellspring Custom Pharmacy

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In The News

Dietary Supplements for a Healthy Heart

Introduction:

According to the CDC¹, in 2006 heart disease (heart attack, heart failure, etc.) accounted for over 630,000 deaths in the U.S. and was the number one cause of death in both men and women. The development of heart disease is very complicated and involves many different factors. Factors that increase the risk of developing heart disease include: family history of heart disease, high blood pressure, high LDL (bad) cholesterol, low HDL (good) cholesterol, obesity, large waist circumference, diabetes, smoking, and physical inactivity. To maintain a healthy heart, it is essential to eat healthy, exercise, and stop smoking. When additional help is required, dietary supplements may be of benefit. Before taking a dietary supplement, check with your doctor or pharmacist to determine which product(s) is best for you. The following dietary products are among the most common supplements used to improve heart health.

To determine your risk of heart disease, visit www.hearthumb.org and click on "What's Your Risk."

Omega-3 Fatty Acids:



History has shown that a fish-rich diet reduces the risk of heart disease. After evaluating the reason for this observation, it was discovered that some fish contained large amounts of omega-3 fatty acids.² The benefits associated with these fatty acids includes: decrease risk of arrhythmias (abnormal heart beats), decrease triglyceride levels, slowing growth of plaque in the arteries, and slight reduction of blood pressure.² Side effects to be aware of when taking fish oil supplements include bleeding, upset stomach, diarrhea, and nausea. The American Heart Association recommends consuming at least two servings of fish in the diet every week to help prevent heart disease. For people who have coronary heart disease or who do not consume enough fish in the diet, fish oil supplements can be used. When choosing a fish oil supplement, it is important to make sure the product is mercury tested due to high levels of mercury in some fish. It is also recommended to get a product that is enteric coated to prevent stomach upset. **We recommend Metagenics brand EPA-DHA Extra Strength softgels at a dose of 2 softgels (1,000 mg combined EPA and DHA) every day with food.**

Plant Sterols:

Plant sterols are chemicals naturally found in plants and vegetable oils that are similar to cholesterol. These chemicals have shown to reduce total cholesterol by up to 13% and LDL cholesterol up to 16% if at least 2 grams per day are consumed with a healthy diet.⁴ Dosages as low as 1 gram per day have shown to significantly reduce LDL cholesterol by approximately

5%.⁴ Side effects from taking plant sterol supplements may include nausea, indigestion, diarrhea, and constipation. Plant sterols may also reduce the absorption of vitamins D₃ and E, so it is important to increase the intake of these vitamins while taking plant sterol supplements. **We recommend using Meta-Sitosterol 2.0 tablets at a dose of 1 tablet every day.**

Garlic

Garlic is an herb that has been used in remedies for many centuries. More recent literature has shown that garlic may have the potential to improve cholesterol, lower blood pressure, and reduce platelet aggregation.³ The most common side effects that may occur from the use of garlic supplementation include bleeding, asthma flares, dizziness, sweating, bad breath, body odor, and headaches. For individuals seeking garlic supplementation, **we recommend taking Garlinase 320mg tablets at a dose of 1 tablet two times daily.**

CoQ10

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is a substance that is naturally produced in the body that has antioxidant properties and is essential for energy production in cells. Levels of CoQ10 have shown to decrease with age and in some patients with heart disease.⁴ The use of CoQ10 is currently controversial and is not typically used unless an individual is deficient. The main benefit demonstrated from CoQ10 supplementation is blood pressure reduction.⁵ It is being evaluated for its effect on other heart conditions, but there is currently not enough information to warrant its use. It is interesting to note that a group of cholesterol lowering drugs, the statins, have been shown to reduce CoQ10 in the body. Documented side effects from CoQ10 supplementation include nausea, vomiting, rash, insomnia, and flu-like symptoms. Ask your doctor before taking CoQ10 supplements if you are currently taking warfarin (Coumadin), levothyroxine (synthroid), or antiviral medications to treat HIV. For patients who are deficient in CoQ10, **we recommend using Natural Factors brand Coenzyme Q10 100mg softgels at a dose of 1 softgel two times daily.**

Summary

Heart disease affects many Americans every year and is currently the leading cause of death. Prevention of heart disease begins with a proper diet and plenty of exercise. For additional help, dietary supplements such as Omega-3 fatty acids, plant sterols, and garlic should be considered.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. FastStats: "Leading Causes of Death." CDC. Accessed 25 January 2010. <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/FASTATS/lcod.htm>>.
2. American Heart Association. "Fish and Omega-3 Fatty Acids." AHA. Accessed 25 January 2010. <<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4632>>.
3. American Heart Association. "Phytochemicals and Cardiovascular Disease." AHA. Accessed 25 January 2010. <<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4722>>.
4. Copeland, Kyle. "Dietary Supplements and Heart Health." Pharmacy Times December 2009:97-98.
5. American Heart Association. "Coenzyme Q10." AHA. Accessed 25 January 2010. <<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4564>>.

What's Brad Reading?

1. If you want to read a very interesting article pick up the January 18, 2010 edition of *Time*. The article entitled "Why Genes Aren't Destiny" by John Cloud is extremely fascinating. Did you know that your genes can be changed in one generation? This article adds great credibility to a healthy lifestyle.
2. I just received a book in the mail today that I'm really looking forward to reading. It's entitled "Anti cancer- A New Way of Life" by David Servan-Schreiber. In just the few minutes that I've reviewed the book, I think it will discuss the role that environment, lifestyle, and trauma play in our health. As a brain cancer survivor he explores both conventional and alternative approaches to surviving this dreaded disease.
3. One of my goals this year is to become a certified cancer coach so much of my reading has been associated with that. The certification is not recognized in Ohio but the study has been interesting to this point in time. I'm hoping to utilize what I learn to better serve patient and increase survival rates. You'll probably be seeing some of the things I learn in future newsletters.

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