

The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

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Holistic Guide to Good Heart Health

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Valentine's Day is around the corner and just about every store is packed with displays of hearts. But before you dig into those boxes of chocolates, use this month as the starting point for a renewed commitment to a heart healthy lifestyle. To help you on your way, we devote this issue of Wellness Express to methods of keeping your ticker in tip top shape.

Heart Healthy Food

Health experts recommend fish because it is an excellent source of omega 3 fatty acids. These fats offer profound health benefits. A diet high in omega 3 acids help stop arteries from getting clogged, reduces cholesterol levels and soothes inflammation. The fish that are the best sources of omega 3 are sardines, salmon, halibut, mackerel, herring, rainbow trout and tuna.

The omega 3 fatty acids you hear the most about are *eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)* and *docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)*. Two servings of fish deliver about 500 milligrams of EPA and DHA. If you are concerned about mercury and other toxins often found in fish, you may want to balance your dietary intake with fish oil supplements (see below).

Don't care for the taste of fish? You can still find plenty of other choices served up by Mother Nature. Many of the recommended foods include fruit, vegetables, legumes and nuts

Inflammation is a key component in heart disease. Along with fish, anti-inflammatory foods include berries, kale, spinach and broccoli. Research conducted by the American College of Cardiology found that a diet rich in these plant-based foods slashes inflammation, cuts triglycerides and keeps blood sugar levels balanced.¹

To meet your protein requirements, opt for soybeans, kidney beans and nuts. According to a physicians' health study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, men who consumed nuts at least twice weekly lowered their risk of sudden cardiac death and coronary heart disease death.² Another study on nuts and cardiovascular health also revealed benefits for women, stating that a plentiful diet of nuts lowers the risk of coronary artery disease for post-menopausal women.³



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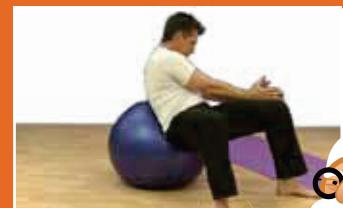


Exercise of the Week

Forward Crunch on Exercise Ball with Oblique Twist

Start: Lie on your back with arms overhead, feet on the floor, knees apart. Head and hips should be resting on the ball.

Exercise: Curl forward & obliquely, with chin partially tucked in, until both hands finish outside one knee. Return to starting position, and repeat – 8-10 times per side, alternating with each repetition.



When a Good Diet Isn't Good Enough

While it is always ideal to get as much of your nutrients through food, you will find situations where you may need to boost your intake of vitamin, minerals and similar nutritional substances with supplements.

Fish Oil

As mentioned earlier, omega 3 fatty acids found in many species of fish provide exceptional benefits for keeping your heart pumping strong. But there are several reasons why you might want to use fish oil supplements as well, including dislike of seafood and availability of fresh fish. Some people report indigestion when using fish oil supplements. You can help limit these problems by freezing the fish oil or consuming it right before a meal. .

Coenzyme Q10

This natural compound is found in many body tissues. As well as being a potent antioxidant, coenzyme Q10 is important for maintaining a healthy heart rhythm, blocking blood clot development and assisting cellular energy production. It is primarily found in organ meats, which are not widely consumed in North America.

As you age, your natural supply of coenzyme Q10 decreases. Some medications also rob your body of this substance, especially cholesterol-lowering statin drugs.⁴ Although generally considered safe, Coenzyme Q10 may interfere with some blood thinning medications. Discuss with a qualified healthcare professional before using supplements.

Magnesium

For heart health, magnesium is important for reducing the risk of cardiac arrhythmias and decreasing the negative impact of stress on cardiovascular function. Magnesium deficiency can boost the risk of hypertension and sudden cardiac death.⁵

A lot of seniors are deficient in magnesium due to food absorption problems and medications, which deplete this mineral. Magnesium supplements may be especially beneficial for people in this age group.

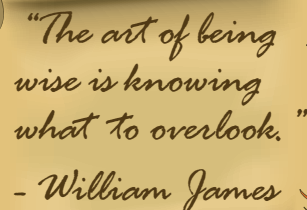
Exercise: Don't Skip This Step

Aerobic exercise forces your heart to pump more blood, which then transports more oxygen and nutrients throughout the body. Exercise also reduces cholesterol and lowers high blood pressure.

The good news is even moderate amounts of exercise can bring great benefits to your heart. The American Heart Association reports women who walk at least two hours a week at any pace had a 30% lower risk of stroke.⁶

Walking is also a safe exercise for most people, but check with your chiropractor before starting an exercise regime. After you begin regular walking, you may want to consider adding some interval training-- increasing your exercise intensity for short bursts. You might intensify your walking speed for 15 to 20 seconds before returning to a more reasonable rate. Interval training can deliver cardio benefits of longer, steady pace exercise but in less time. Ask your chiropractor if interval training is appropriate for you.

Quote to Inspire



"The art of being wise is knowing what to overlook."
- William James

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