

# Everything Zen Nutritional Consulting Newsletter

## Cardiovascular Health

February is heart awareness month, let's take a moment to consider the many things we can do to ensure we remain HEART HEALTHY...

Did you know heart disease was almost unheard of until around the 1930s, and then dramatically increased during the 1950s???

Did you also know that it was around this time that our diets changed dramatically??

Before the 1950s, diets were high in saturated fat (butter, lard, coconut butter, animal fat) whereas after this time, refined polyunsaturated fats made their grand appearance into our food chain (vegetable oils, safflower oil, sunflower oil, soy oil etc.), and with them bringing a host of negative health effects.

These refined polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) turn rancid and become trans fats when they are heated at high temperatures ~ think: margarine, French fries, donuts, breaded chicken, beef & seafood ~ as well as baked goods, such as: muffins, cookies, cakes & crackers, etc.

Eating these foods on a regular basis, increases free radical production in the body, and with it increases inflammation (of the cells, vessels, tissues & organs) as well as the risk of degenerative conditions, such as: heart disease & various cancers.

Also, each year since the 1950s we have been relying more and more heavily on processed foods ~ just take a walk down any aisle of your local grocery store and check out how

many quick, convenience foods have surfaced (it is truly shocking!). Processed foods, are not only deficient in nutrients, but also contain large sums of these PUFAs as well as refined, insulin spiking, carbohydrates (white flour products).

So, now, not only are we not eating good fats, but we are also taking in large sums of bad fats & refined carbohydrates....is it really so surprising that our health is suffering so dramatically???

Food manufacturers have done a great job of scaring us into avoid saturated fats ~ but guess what? They are actually NOT that bad, and the most stable at high temperatures. So, for cooking purposes, use BUTTER or COCONUT BUTTER and you will dramatically reduce your risk of heart disease & cancer!

Next, do NOT avoid carbohydrates, but DO avoid the refined carbs ~ such as: white flour products (pasta, cereals, cookies, bread etc), sugar (especially high fructose corn syrup), juices, carbonated beverages etc ~ focus more on the whole grains ~ brown rice, buckwheat, spelt, kamut, millet, barley ~ and products made from these grains, as well as squash, sweet potatoes & other root veggies.

And remember, the closer to nature your foods are, the more nutritious they will be!

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### Important Cardiovascular Blood Tests

Did you know that cholesterol is actually an anti-oxidant, and that it rises to PROTECT the body from infection and foreign invaders?? What's more, elevated cholesterol levels alone are not a good predictor of heart disease ~ in fact, cholesterol can be low, while heart disease risk high ~ some other tests are very useful in predicting heart disease risk...

**LDL** ~ 'BAD' Cholesterol is more likely to cause blood clots & raises when anti-oxidant intake is low ~ reduce intake of meat & dairy products as well as processed foods containing: hydrogenated oils

**HDL** ~ 'GOOD' Cholesterol ~ helps transport LDL to the liver, where it is processed for excretion from the body ~ the higher your HDL levels, the lower your risk of heart disease ~ boost levels by eating; fish oils, flax, hemp & olive oil

**TRIGLYCERIDES** ~ are associated with an increased risk of heart attacks and are related to the amount of refined carbs eaten ~ so again, focus on WHOLE grains!

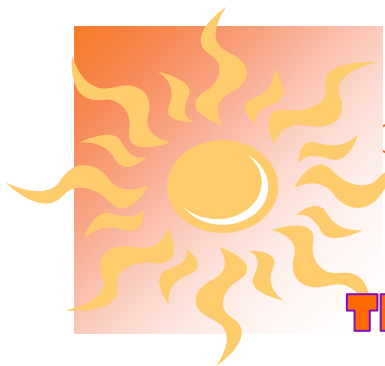
**HOMOCYSTEINE** ~ a by-product of protein metabolism, become problematic when elevated ~ increase intake of leafy greens, B6, B12 & folic acid!

**C-REACTIVE PROTEIN** ~ important test when cholesterol levels are normal as it detects inflammation in the cardiovascular system & heart disease

### Important blood tests to get...

- High sensitivity C-Reactive Protein
- Homocysteine
- Triglycerides
- HDL, LDL, Total Cholesterol
- Fasting Glucoses

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## The High Cost of Cardiac Medications

I cannot state how important it is to PREVENT disease from occurring, because once it does, the medications that one is forced to take, sure do come with a high cost... here is a look at some.

Many will tell you to take aspirin to reduce your risk of heart disease.... I say NO!

### Aspirin is a toxic drug that

- Acidifies the body (which speeds up & increases inflammation & degeneration) & depletes important nutrients

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- Increases the risk of STROKE!!!
- Increases the risk of ulcers & stomach problems (it is very harsh on the stomach lining)

### Beta-Blockers/Blood Pressure Regulators

- Deplete numerous nutrients, including:
  - ~ CoQ10
  - ~ Magnesium
  - ~ Vitamin B1, B6, C, Folic Acid
  - ~ Zinc, Potassium, Calcium

Many of which are needed for proper heart functioning!!!

- Some of the health risks associated with them include:
  - ~ increased risk of heart disease
  - ~ low energy & fatigue, depression
  - ~ slow healing & lowered immunity
  - ~ osteoporosis, tooth decay
  - ~ birth defects
  - ~ anemia, bruising & bleeding disorders
  - ~ heartbeat irregularities

### Cholesterol Lowering Drugs

- Deplete: CoQ10 which can lead to: increased risk of heart disease, low energy, suppressed immune system

In addition to this, ALL medications have to be processed by the liver in order to be eliminated from the body. Well, EACH pill that is taken, takes roughly 20 days to be metabolized by the liver... so, can you imagine just HOW much of a burden this places on your poor liver!!!

So, rather than deplete yourself of further nutrients, I HIGHLY encourage you to do a few things to keep your heart healthy...

- EXERCISE ~ do a MINIMUM of 30 minutes of cardio at least 3 times a week (ideally daily) ~ but be sure to stay within your heart-rate zone (i.e. not too intense!)
- Increase your intake of veggies (especially leafy greens), as well as: fruit, nuts, whole grains, beans & legumes, lean proteins & cold-water fish
- Season foods with: sea salt (unrefined), garlic & parsley
- AVOID: sugars & refined carbohydrates
- Supplement with Cod Liver Oil in the winter, and fish oil in the summer ~ also add 1-2 tbsp of flax or hemp oils to your foods (after cooking) on a daily basis to optimize your intake of EFAs (Essential Fatty Acids)
- Use BUTTER instead of margarine, and cook with COCONUT butter or ghee!
- Reduce caffeine & increase water intake

### Nutrients that Protect the Heart

**DRAINAGE REMEDIES** ~ these increase circulation, & reduce blockages within the cardiac vessels and can dramatically clean out debris that is congesting arteries. These are homeopathic, which means they can not only be taken with standard medications, but also REDUCE the need/dosage of the medication!

**FISH OILS** ~ Cod liver oil, during the winter, & fish oil during the summer ~ these are the BEST BLOOD THINNERS on the market, and will also REDUCE inflammation in the body (important especially for the cardiovascular system)!

**B6, B12, FOLIC ACID** ~ together these have shown themselves effective at reducing elevated homocysteine levels. However, when taking these nutrients, it is also important to take a B50 Complex, as all the B vitamins work synergistically

**Co-Q10** ~ the most potent anti-oxidant for the cardiovascular system!

**GRAPSEED EXTRACT** ~ another potent anti-oxidant, found also in red wine!

**MAGNESIUM & POTASSIUM** ~ 2 minerals that affect blood pressure and cardiac muscle contractions ~ they are also EASILY flushed from the body by diuretics (medication & CAFFEINE ~ coffee, black tea & colas!)

### Cardio-Protective Nutrients...

- Fish Oils, Garlic & Parsley
- B50, B6, B12, Folic Acid, Niacin
- Anti-Oxidants: Co-Q10, Grapeseed Extract, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Alpha Lipoic Acid,
- Minerals: Magnesium, Potassium, Selenium, Zinc
- Plant Sterols, L-Taurine, Homeopathics

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