



Lifestyle Letter

Wellness News

Heart Healthy Habits

Exercise and a healthy meal plan makes all the difference when it comes to heart health.

Heart health is within your control. Small changes, done gradually, can protect you from many cardiovascular diseases. Making these changes can get you on the right track to protecting your heart's health.

Get Moving with Exercise. It's important to get regular exercise, five days a week for 30 minutes a day. Exercise is good medicine and it needs to be incorporated into your life. The No. 1 way to raise HDL, the "good" cholesterol, is through exercise, HDL's are the Roto-Rooter of the arteries.

Exercise also helps lower blood pressure and stress levels, both risk factors for heart disease. While a total of 150 minutes a week is the goal, you can work out in 10-minute sessions to get yourself started to a healthier heart.

Cut Fat from your Meals. Cutting fat is the single most important thing you can do for your health and your waistline. Fat comes in many forms, the most dangerous are the trans fats, also referred to as partially hydrogenated oils. They extend the shelf life of packaged and processed foods, so look for them on ingredients lists and steer clear of those products.

Saturated fats are also on the list of fats to avoid. These include full-fat dairy foods and drinks, beef, lamb, pork and the skin on poultry.

You'll want to substitute with monounsaturated fats like olive and coconut oil, and choose low fat dairy products.

Eat Functional Foods. Power your diet with foods that improve heart health. Try to eat fish at least two times a week, especially deep coldwater fish like salmon, tuna and sardines.

High fiber foods like fruit, vegetables, beans and lentils, also improve heart health.



Reduce Salt. Sodium, or salt, naturally exists in foods, even the spinach you pick fresh from your garden. We do need 500 milligrams of sodium a day, but the problem is we're getting much more than that. One teaspoon of salt has 2,300 milligrams, the maximum daily amount recommended for most people. That number drops to 1,500 for those with high blood pressure, people in middle age and older and those cultures who are at

greater risk for high blood pressure.

Salt causes your body to retain water and your heart to work harder, leading to high blood pressure, a cardiovascular disease that is also a risk factor for coronary heart disease and stroke. Salt comes in many chemical compositions so avoid foods that contain ingredients like sodium, including monosodium glutamate or MSG.

Regular chiropractic care and wellness checkups are important, even when you feel fine. They can detect elevated levels before any damage can be done.

Be Fit.

Core-strengthening Exercise

If you're like most people, cardio is at the top of your exercise list. But by focusing too much on cardio and neglecting core-strengthening exercise, can result in weak core muscles and poor flexibility and increase your chances of getting hurt. Yoga and pilates are some good examples of exercise routines that incorporate core-strengthening techniques.

It's important to practice core-strengthening exercises that mimic everyday activities, such as bending, lifting, and pressing - in addition to cardio conditioning.

Core-strengthening exercises require you to use several muscle groups in one fluid movement. This will strengthen and develop the muscles in the back, abdomen, pelvis, and hips and promote stability and flexibility - all essential for preventing injury and helping you maintain a healthy weight.

Core-strengthening exercises doesn't require fancy equipment to achieve results. Try using the following household items as part of your exercise equipment:

- A armless chair
- A mat or thick towel
- Light hand weights or soup cans

Even though core-strengthening exercise won't raise your heart rate the way a vigorous cardio workout will, you will get a heart pumping routine and feel the power and strength which will result in increased energy, flexibility and fitness.

Think Well.

Health Benefits of Laughter

Funny movies, sitcoms, cute babies and a good joke can all offer one of the most powerful, natural stress relievers out there: laughter.

The benefits of a good laugh are wide-ranging and can include protection from emotional issues like depression and improving the health of your heart.

Mental Benefits. Studies show that people who use humor to fight stress feel less lonely and more positive about themselves.

Physical Benefits. Studies show that people that laugh a lot tend to be in good health and generally feel well. Laughter is one of the commonly used therapies among cancer patients, who find that one of the benefits of laughter is an improved quality of life.

Heart Benefits. Laughter can also be good for your heart. Some research shows that when you laugh, there is an increase in oxygen-rich blood flow in your body, possibly due to endorphins, which create a chemical rush that counters negative feelings and stress.

Any day is a good day to start laughing more. Find people to laugh with, have a "woohoo" moment each day, anything that will remind you to give yourself the gift of laughter.

Eat Right.

Fennel, Porcini and Chicken Cacciatore

Ingredients

- 1/2 ounce mushrooms, porcini, dried
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, extra virgin
- 1 large pepper, green, bell
- 3 pounds chicken, thighs, boneless, skinless
- 1 large onion
- 1 large fennel bulb
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 tablespoon rosemary, fresh
- 2 teaspoons orange peel, (zest) grated
- 1 teaspoon thyme, fresh
- 3 tablespoons vinegar, red wine
- 3/4 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Place mushrooms in a large bowl, pour boiling water over them and let soak.
3. Heat oil in a large, high-sided skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat.
4. Brown chicken on all sides, turning occasionally, 4 to 5 minutes.
5. Transfer chicken to 9 x 13 baking dish.
6. Reduce heat to medium and add peppers and onion to the pan; cook, stirring often, until wilted, about 3 minutes.
7. Add garlic, rosemary, orange zest and thyme, cook, stirring constantly, for 30 seconds. Pour in vinegar and cook for 1 minute, stirring and scraping up any brown bits. Remove from heat.
8. Drain the mushrooms in a fine sieve lined with paper towels; reserve liquid. Rinse the mushrooms, then coarsely chop. Stir them into the pan along with the soaking liquid, broth, and tomato paste. Return to heat, bring to simmer, then pour the mixture over the chicken. Cover baking dish with foil.
9. Bake the cacciatore until bubbling, about 45 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Makes 8 servings.

Per Serving: Cal. 337., Sat Fat. 4g, Fiber 3g, Carbs. 10g, Protein. 33g., Total Fat 16g.

Be sure to visit "My CreatingWellnessSpace" for more recipe ideas!