

Strategies for General Health

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Eat REAL FOOD. Replace processed foods (which are loaded with refined sugar and carbs, processed fructose, and trans fat — all of which promote heart disease) with whole, unprocessed or minimally processed foods, ideally organic, and/or locally grown.

Avoid meats and other animal products such as dairy and eggs sourced from animals raised in confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Instead, opt for grass-fed, pastured varieties, raised according to organic standards. Limit your protein intake to one half gram of protein for every pound of lean body mass which is about 40 to 70 grams for most people.

Eliminate no-fat and low-fat foods, and increase consumption of healthy fats. Those with insulin resistance would likely benefit from consuming 50 to 85 percent of their daily calories from healthy saturated fats, such as avocados, butter made from raw grass-fed organic milk, raw dairy, organic pastured egg yolks, coconuts and coconut oil, unheated organic nut oils, raw nuts, and grass-fed meats. No- or low-fat foods are usually processed foods that are high in sugar, which raises your small, dense LDL particles.

Balancing your omega-3 to omega-6 ratio is also key for heart health, as these fatty acids help build the cells in your arteries that make the prostacyclin that keeps your blood flowing smoothly. Omega-3 deficiency can cause or contribute to very serious health problems, both mental and physical, and may be a significant underlying factor of up to 96,000 premature deaths each year. For more information about omega-3s and the best sources of this fat, review this previous article.

You also need the appropriate ratios of calcium, magnesium, sodium, and potassium, and all of these are generally abundant in a whole food diet. To get more fresh vegetables into your diet, consider juicing.

Optimize your vitamin D level. Some researchers, like Dr. Stephanie Seneff, believe optimizing your vitamin D level through regular sun exposure, opposed to taking an oral supplement, may be key to optimizing your heart health. If you do opt for a supplement, you also increase need for vitamin K2.

Optimize your gut health. Regularly eating fermented foods, such as fermented vegetables, will help reseed your gut with beneficial bacteria that may play an important role in preventing heart disease and countless other health problems.

Quit smoking and reduce your alcohol consumption.

Exercise regularly. Exercise is actually one of the safest, most effective ways to prevent and treat heart disease. In 2013, researchers at Harvard and Stanford reviewed 305 randomized controlled trials, concluding there were "no statistically detectable differences" between physical activity and medications for heart disease.

High-intensity interval training, which requires but a fraction of the time compared to conventional cardio, has been shown to be especially effective. Exercise is one of the most important stimulants of mitochondrial biogenesis.

Pay attention to your oral health. There's convincing evidence linking the state of your teeth and gums to a variety of health issues, including heart disease. In one 2010 study,²⁰ those with the worst oral hygiene increased their risk of developing heart disease by 70 percent, compared to those who brush their teeth twice a day.

Avoid statins, as the side effects of these drugs are numerous, while the benefits are debatable. If you are taking statins for any reason it is imperative to take Coenzyme Q10. I believe the best is the reduced form called Ubiquinol.