The heart is the hardest working muscle in the body. It beats over 100,000 times and pumps over 9,500 litres of blood through the body each and every day. Without a properly functioning heart, the body is deprived of the oxygen and nutrients it needs for optimal function. That’s why maintaining cardiovascular health is so important—it affects every part of our body. However, despite improvements in medicine and technology, cardiovascular disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the world. While it tends to strike men earlier in their lives, it affects both genders and can be a severe and debilitating condition leading to frequent hospitalisations and prescription medications.

The good news is that cardiovascular disease can be prevented through diet and lifestyle changes. Studies continue to support the role of exercise, nutrition and healthy diet in preventing heart disease. Whether you are young or old, everyone can benefit from improving diet and lifestyle to prevent this debilitating condition. This issue of News You Can Use will go into some of the latest nutrition research in heart health and provide tips for how to keep your ticker ticking.

**Omega-3s:**

HEART HEALTHY

The American Heart Association recommends at least two servings of fatty fish per week to support heart health and for good reason. A large body of evidence supports the role that omega-3’s play in protecting against cardiovascular disease by decreasing triglyceride levels, slowing the growth rate of atherosclerotic plaque and lowering blood pressure. And now a recent study published by a global consortium of researchers known as the Fatty Acids and Outcomes Research Consortium, or FORCE, found that omega-3 fatty acids from seafood and plant-based foods are associated with a lower risk of fatal heart attack. By pooling data from diverse large studies from 16 countries that included more than 45,639 participants, researchers found that omega-3s were associated with a 10% lower risk of fatal heart attacks. These findings are the most comprehensive to date of how omega-3s may influence heart disease and support the importance of fish and omega-3 consumption in heart health.

Salmon Oil Plus

Each serving of our exclusive UHPO3 (Ultra High Potency Omega-3) formula provides 1,070mg of total omega-3 fatty acids with standardised amounts of all eight naturally occurring omega-3s, promoting heart health. Salmon Oil Plus is clinically proven to support cardiovascular health.

#2672 – Omega-3 Salmon Oil Plus, 90 capsules

Your heart beats over 100,000 times every day.

STUDIES CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE ROLE OF exercise, nutrition and healthy diet in preventing heart disease.
Exercise & Cardiovascular Health

One of the best things you can do for your heart is to get moving! Our sedentary lifestyles put us at a higher risk of cardiovascular disease because the heart is not working to its full potential and grows weaker over time. Staying active is one of the top ways to improve overall cardiovascular health. Benefits include improved cholesterol and fat levels, reduced inflammation in the arteries, weight loss, more elastic blood vessels, and improved blood flow/pressure. For children and adolescents, the US Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least an hour of physical activity a day, including muscle and bone strengthening activities at least three times a week. For adults, the weekly recommendation is 150 minutes of moderately intense exercise, 75 minutes of vigorously intense exercise, or a combination of the two. A good way for individuals who are not currently active to get started is to go for walks and then gradually increase the duration or distance.
It’s long been known that high-fibre diets support cardiovascular health by promoting weight loss, lowering cholesterol and improving hypertension. However, a recent study from Northwestern University showed for the first time that fibre consumption could also impact lifetime risk for cardiovascular disease. This study looked at data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) that included more than 11,000 participants and imputed their data into a logistical model that predicted their lifetime risk for heart disease. What they found was that younger adults (ages 20–39) and middle-aged adults (ages 40–59) with the highest fibre intake had a statistically significant lower lifetime risk of cardiovascular disease compared to those in the same age group with the lowest fibre intake. Researchers were amazed at the findings and concluded that starting a high-fibre diet now could significantly improve long-term risk for heart problems. How much fibre should we aim for? The American Heart Association recommends at least 25 grams of dietary fibre a day for adults.

**Fibre**

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**Soya**

A recent study published in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition shows that supplementation with soya protein is associated with improved levels of E-selectin, a biomarker of endothelial (the lining of blood vessels) dysfunction and levels of leptin, a type of adipocytokine (signalling molecule produced by fat tissue). The study was an eight-week randomised, placebo-controlled, double-blind, three-phase crossover trial comparing the effects of a 40 g soybean protein supplement, 40 g of milk protein supplement, and 40 g carbohydrate placebo biomarkers of cardiovascular health. The researchers concluded that soya protein increased plasma levels of E-selectin, which may improve endothelial function as well as leptin, which may improve metabolic function. These findings corroborate with previous studies which show that soya can be beneficial for reducing the bad LDL cholesterol in the body, improving endothelial function, and reducing LDL cholesterol oxidation. While the mechanism is not fully understood, one way soya acts on LDL is by increasing the size of LDL cholesterol, which is associated with a lower risk of heart disease compared to small, dense LDL particles, according to researchers at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Center on Aging at Tufts University. However, further research is needed to understand all the activities of bioactive compounds in soya.

**Garlic**

Garlic has been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. It is associated with reduced cholesterol levels, blood pressure and heart disease risk. A recent meta-analysis adds to the large body of evidence supporting the cardiovascular benefits of garlic. Published in the Journal of Nutrition, researchers identified randomised controlled trials evaluating the effect of garlic on blood pressure and cholesterol. They found that garlic supplementation among individuals with hypertension resulted in a significant decrease in systolic blood pressure, on average, by 8.7 mmHg and in diastolic blood pressure by 6.1 mmHg. They also reported that previous data showed that treatment of garlic longer than two months was effective in reducing total and LDL cholesterol by 10% among individuals with elevated levels.

**REFERENCES**