

HEART HEALTH

Time For A Gut Check For Heart-Healthy Living

(NAPSA)—While heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States, keeping your cholesterol in check may keep you out of such statistics. High total cholesterol remains one of the top culprits in putting Americans at risk for this disease that kills 600,000 men and women every year. In fact, according to a report by the American Heart Association, 44 percent of the U.S. adult population has high total cholesterol.

Cholesterol, a waxy, fatlike substance that's found in all of the body's cells, travels through the bloodstream in small packages called lipoproteins. There are two kinds of lipoproteins: low-density (LDL) and high-density (HDL). Over time, LDL ("bad") cholesterol builds up in the arteries, narrowing them and preventing blood from getting to your heart. If a clot forms and blocks a narrowed artery, a heart attack can result. HDL ("good") cholesterol carries LDL cholesterol away from your artery walls from other parts of the body to the liver, where it is removed. These combined levels make up the total cholesterol.

While lifestyle changes like healthy diet and exercise have long been the tried-and-true prescription for cholesterol management, there are surprising new approaches to heart-healthy living, said Chris Mohr, Ph.D., R.D., expert in nutrition and exercise physiology.

"There's a lot of talk about probiotics and digestive health these days, but many Americans would be surprised to learn that heart health can be a benefit of natural probiotics," said Dr. Mohr.

"The first and most important steps in cholesterol management are lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking, a healthy diet and regular physical activity," he added. "But there are definitely some cardiac advantages to certain foods and supplements that most Americans wouldn't necessarily associate with them."

Dr. Mohr's top multifunctional heart-health tips include:

• **Probiotics aren't just for digestive health:** Clinical studies have shown that natural probiotics—the healthy bacteria in the digestive tract—can help maintain healthy cholesterol in adults

What do your numbers mean?

Total Cholesterol Level

Less than 200 mg/dL
200–239 mg/dL
240 mg/dL and higher

Total Cholesterol Category

Desirable
Borderline high
High

HDL (Good) Cholesterol Level

Less than 40 mg/dL
40–59 mg/dL
60 mg/dL and higher

HDL Cholesterol Category

A major risk factor for heart disease
The higher, the better
Considered protective against heart disease

LDL (Bad) Cholesterol Level

Less than 100 mg/dL
100–129 mg/dL
130–159 mg/dL
160–189 mg/dL
190 mg/dL and higher

LDL Cholesterol Category

Optimal
Near optimal/optimal
Borderline high
High
Very high



by maintaining the amount of cholesterol the body produces and by maintaining the amount absorbed from food.

• **Fiber for a fit ticker:** High-fiber foods don't just keep you regular, they aid in maintaining heart health. Add fiber-rich foods like vegetables, fruits and beans, and also replace fiber-free carbohydrates (such as white bread, flour tortillas and even many breakfast cereals) with their whole grain alternatives.

• **Fat can be good:** Fat isn't always a bad thing, especially if you swap out saturated fats with unsaturated fats. Instead of butter, use olive or canola oil. Add foods rich in polyunsaturated fats (think salmon and walnuts) and monounsaturated fats, like avocados and almonds.

CardioViva™ is the first natural probiotic that has been clinically proven to help maintain healthy cholesterol levels in adults. Probiotics—bacteria that confer a health benefit to the host—are being studied to determine if they may have a more significant role in helping to maintain and improve health and wellness through the gut. Emerging science is evaluating whether supplementing the microbiome (gut bacteria) with probiotics can play a role in health and certain chronic diseases such as heart disease. These healthy bacteria may help to maintain healthy cholesterol

levels in two ways: by maintaining the amount of cholesterol your body produces and by maintaining the amount absorbed from food.

"CardioViva™ is a natural way to fill the gap between diet, exercise and medication," said Dr. Mohr. "In addition, healthy people who want to enjoy the digestive benefits of probiotics and also want to maintain healthy levels of cholesterol may benefit from this natural supplement."

The National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) guidelines state that all adults age 20 or older should have their cholesterol tested once every five years. If you have borderline high or high results from your blood cholesterol screening, talk to a health care professional about how to manage your numbers.

For more information, visit www.mycardioviva.com.

