

♥ HEART HEALTH

The Best Way To Avoid Heart Disease? Start Protecting Your Heart While You're Young

(NAPSA)—The good news is that thanks to skilled emergency medicine techniques, more people today actually survive heart attacks. The bad news is that they then are people with heart disease.


“Surviving in order to live longer with heart disease is not ideal,” said Conrad Earnest, Ph.D., director of exercise physiology at The Cooper Heart Institute. “A better idea is to do everything you can to prevent heart disease. And the younger you make that commitment, the better.”

In addition to eating a heart-healthy diet, exercising regularly and quitting smoking, many Americans are improving their heart health with supplements that have been shown to make a real difference. According to The Dietary Supplement Information Bureau, a non-profit organization providing science-based information to the public, the following supplements can contribute to a healthier heart:

• **Vitamins:** Vitamin C helps prevent cardiovascular disease. Vitamin E reduces the progress of hardening of the arteries. The B vitamins, vitamin B6, B12 and folic acid, protect your heart.

• **Minerals:** Magnesium is a key mineral for heart health. It keeps platelets from clumping together, thins the blood, blocks calcium uptake, relaxes blood vessels and helps oxygenate the heart. Potassium lowers high blood pressure and helps protect

against strokes. Selenium protects the heart and helps prevent toxic effects of some drugs.

www.supplementinfo.org is a non-commercial Web site that sells no products but provides accurate, science-based information to the public 

• **Coenzyme Q10 (Co-Q10)**—This nutrient has recently been recognized as playing a key role in heart health. A Co-Q10 deficiency can seriously affect heart function. Cardiologists often recommend Co-Q10 to patients taking statins (cholesterol-reducing medications).

• **Omega-3 Fatty Acids**—More than 4,500 studies over the last 25 years have shown how vital omega-3 fatty acids are to both preventing and treating cardiovascular-related diseases. Few of us eat enough fish to provide necessary levels of these essential fatty acids. Taking them in supplement form reduces both heart disease and sudden cardiac death.

• **Soy**—Perhaps the best publicized food for heart health, soy is available in food formats ranging from soy milk to soy hot dogs. Soy isoflavones are an especially popular supplement for preventing heart disease.

• **Beta-1,3 Glucan**—The major cholesterol lowering agents in oat bran fiber, beta-1,3 glucans lower total cholesterol and LDL

(the “bad” cholesterol) and reduce cardiovascular disease risk.

• **Herbs:**

• **Hawthorn**—Used extensively by doctors in Europe to stimulate the circulatory system, it is reported to regulate both high and low blood pressure.

• **Garlic**—Reported to lower total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, and increase “good” cholesterol (HDL), garlic is used to prevent strokes and heart attacks. An antioxidant, it is believed to be beneficial in preventing stroke and arteriosclerosis. Since cooking may inactivate its benefits, garlic is best taken raw or as a supplement.

• **Psyllium Seed**—The FDA has approved psyllium to reduce cardiovascular disease risk. Its high levels of soluble fiber can help lower cholesterol.

• **Grape Seed Extract**—Despite a fairly rich diet, French people have fewer heart attacks, perhaps because they drink red wine every day. The secret of red wine is probably not the alcohol. More likely it's the antioxidant powers of the seed and skin of the grape. Grape seed extract is used to treat circulatory disorders.

To learn more about these supplements, appropriate dosages or potential interactions with medications, you can visit the Web at www.supplementinfo.org, a Web site that sells no products but provides accurate, science-based information to the public.