

♥ HEART HEALTH

Expert Outlines Five-Step Approach to Optimal Heart Health

(NAPSA)—Alan Flood, 58, has a good reason to be concerned about his heart. A few years ago, poor lifestyle choices and diet contributed to major heart problems. Flood knew he needed to make changes to improve his health.

For many, this can seem like a daunting task. However, nutrition expert Lynn Laboranti, M.S., R.D., maintains that it's never too late to strive for optimal heart health. She offers the following five-step approach to help get your ticker in tip-top shape:

Step 1: Move It and Lose It. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), losing as little as 10 pounds can drastically reduce the risk of a heart attack. Daily aerobic activity, such as walking or swimming, will increase your fitness and help keep your heart in shape. Remember that every bit helps.

Step 2: Expand Your Palette. Eat a rainbow of fresh foods to get a wide variety of nutrients. Heart-healthy foods like garlic, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish with beneficial omega-3 fatty acids, a handful of walnuts and even an occasional glass of red wine can be beneficial when added to a well-balanced, low-fat/low-cholesterol diet.

Step 3: Strive for a Perfect 10. Statins, or cholesterol-lowering drugs, are used by approximately 20 million Americans. Health experts found that statins deplete the body's stores of coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), a vitaminlike substance found in every cell in the body and responsible for boosting energy and providing powerful anti-oxidant heart protection against free radicals. Laboranti suggests taking a maximum-strength supplement such as Nature Made CoQ10 400 mg for optimal heart health.



Exercise, a balanced diet supplemented with anti-oxidants and not smoking can do your heart good.

Step 4: Put It Out. Smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the U.S. Cigarette smokers are twice as likely to die from coronary heart disease as nonsmokers, says the AHA. But a Surgeon General's report found that after one year off cigarettes, the excess risk of heart disease caused by smoking is reduced by half. Set up a plan to help you quit successfully.

Step 5: Stress Less. Stress-related complaints make up nine out of 10 visits to primary care physicians, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Besides challenging the immune system and affecting mood, constant stress can also take a toll on heart health. Make note of your stress triggers and create a strategy for managing them. Try setting aside time for yourself every day.

Most importantly, consult a health care professional before starting any diet or exercise regimen. To ask Lynn Laboranti a question, read additional articles on heart health and find information on vitamin supplements that can help, visit the Nature Made Wellness Advisor at www.NatureMade.com.