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Heart Disease & Congestive Heart Failure, Atherosclerosis, High Blood Pressure, etc.

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Heart disease is the NUMBER 1 killer in women. It causes 1 in 3 women's deaths each year, killing approximately one woman every minute. The symptoms of heart disease can be very different in women vs. men and are often missed. Please understand... heart disease kills more women than breast cancer! While

1 in 31 American women dies from breast cancer each year, 1 in 3 DIES of HEART DISEASE!

Heart disease affects the blood vessels and cardiovascular system. Numerous problems can result from this, many of which are related to a process called atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is a big word for a big problem: fatty deposits that can clog arteries. These buildups are called plaque. They're made of cholesterol, fatty substances, cellular waste products, calcium and fibrin (a clotting material in the blood). Sometimes deposits in arteries are compared to a plumbing problem. Think of sludge forming on the inside of pipes. That's not a perfect comparison because buildups don't just form on artery walls but inside them. Still, you get the idea.

But it doesn't end there. Heart disease can take many other forms as well:

- **Heart failure or congestive heart failure**, which means that the heart is still working, but it isn't pumping blood as well as it should, or getting enough oxygen.
- **Arrhythmia or an abnormal rhythm of the heart**, which means the heart is either beating too fast, too slow or irregularly. This can affect how well the heart is functioning and whether or not the heart is able to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs.
- **Heart valve problems** can lead to the heart not opening enough to allow proper blood flow. Sometimes the heart valves don't close and blood leaks through, or the valve leaflets bulge or prolapse into the upper chamber, causing blood to flow backward through them.
- **Coronary heart disease (plaque in arteries in or leading to the heart)**
- **Angina – chest pain from reduced blood flow in arteries supplying the heart muscle**
- **Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD – plaque in arteries of the extremities, especially the legs)**
- **High blood pressure**

Let's take a closer look at Congestive heart failure (CHF): this is a condition affects both men and women... CHF is when the heart is unable to properly pump blood to the rest of the body, causing fluid to back up in the vessels, leading to swelling and inadequate blood flow to the organs. There are two types of CHF: systolic and diastolic. Systolic heart failure (now referred to as "heart failure with reduced ejection fraction") occurs when the heart muscle is weak and unable to contract with as much force. Diastolic heart failure (now referred to as "heart failure with preserved ejection fraction") occurs when the heart muscle is stiff and unable to relax, inhibiting the heart chambers from filling with blood properly. Both of these can result in significant disability.

The key is prevention of congestive heart failure with a plant based diet and active lifestyle; however, once CHF has developed, a plant-based diet can significantly improve symptoms and quality of life and, in some cases, reverse impaired heart function. From 2007 to 2010, an estimated 5.1 million Americans older than age 20 had heart failure. This is projected to increase by 46% to 8 million Americans older than age 18 by the year 2030. In 2010, the cost of heart failure in the U.S. was \$30.7 billion and will likely increase to \$69.7 billion by the year 2030.

Because of impaired pumping of the heart, blood will back up into the lungs and lower extremities causing difficulty breathing and swelling. Patients with CHF often have to sleep with the heads elevated on several pillows because of shortness of breath. They can have trouble breathing while exerting themselves, as well as palpitations or chest pain. Swelling can occur in the feet, ankles or whole leg and even into the back. Patients often complain of dizziness or fatigue. CHF can significantly affect the quality of life.

Anything that damages heart muscle increases the risk of developing congestive heart failure. The primary causes are modern eating habits, smoking, substance abuse, and a sedentary lifestyle. The Standard American Diet leads to a constellation of dietary-caused risk factors including being overweight, diabetes/insulin resistance, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and inflammation. Arterial cholesterol plaques and inflammation can lead to heart attacks causing damage to the heart muscle. Valvular heart disease can affect blood flow and how the heart pumps, causing changes to the heart muscle and eventual heart failure. Thyroid disease can also contribute to the development of CHF. The key to prevention, improvement, and even reversal is a Plant Based diet low in sodium and oils.

No matter which type of heart disease or cardiovascular symptoms you or your loved one is experiencing... here's the way to lessen the severity and very likely reverse the situation:

Action Plan

****Get your hormones and basic blood labs checked. Balancing hormones is KEY to also supporting cardiovascular health. Pay particular attention to your thyroid and adrenal gland hormones. Work with a functional or holistic practitioner who understand this. Hormones should be checked with a saliva hormone test which is more accurate than serum blood testing. Getting a HAIR TISSUE MINERAL ANALYSIS done to check your particular body's need for potassium, magnesium, etc. is key.**

1. The #1 thing to reduce is sodium intake. Also, reduce or eliminate animal products. A plant-based diet is best for this condition. Processed

foods are not your friend.

2. Vitamin E - Vitamin E is a natural antioxidant that helps to get rid of the free radicals in your body that destroy cell structures. Vitamin E contains d-alpha tocopherol, which helps strengthen your heart muscles. Some of the best sources for vitamin E are sunflower seeds, almonds, & flax seed.

3. Magnesium - Magnesium helps your heart muscles function properly. The daily dose of magnesium you need to maintain a healthy heart is 280 to 400 mg. You can get natural doses of magnesium by consuming whole grains, almonds, pinto beans and green vegetables. Hemp seeds contain 15x the amount of magnesium found in broccoli.

4. Potassium - When your potassium levels are too low, heart conditions like an arrhythmia can occur. Hemp seeds are a great source of potassium having 2x the amount of bananas. Avocados have 35% more potassium than bananas and aid in improving the cardiovascular system but should be limited due to their fat content. Potassium also is found in legumes, almonds, other nuts, and many fruits and vegetables.

5. Vitamin D - Researchers from the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science at the University of Bonn, and the Drug Commission of the German Medical Association in Germany have studied Vitamin D's effectiveness in improving congestive heart failure symptoms. Vitamin D helps minimize swelling and inflammation. Vitamin D also helps minimize fluid retention.

6. Apple cider vinegar also reduces inflammation.

7. Celery is a great diuretic and an anti inflammatory. Eat it raw and juice it daily.

8. Chlorella and Spirulina have more benefits than I can list

9. Organic tomatoes may be one of the best things for you to eat

BEST DIET

- The most aggressive and effective approach to reversing heart disease is a diet that is a micronutrient-dense low-fat diet with an array of cruciferous vegetables, non-green vegetables, beans, fruits, starches and seeds. This will reduce inflammation, oxidative stress, and atherosclerotic plaque formation in the blood vessels.
- Limit extra sodium intake to 0-300mg daily based on lower leg edema and lung congestion. More sodium may be indicated, if use of diuretics necessitate it, and this should be determined by THE physician monitoring your case.
- Monitor fluid intake. Drink only when thirsty or when exercising, sweating, etc. It is important to maintain normal hydration without overloading on fluids.

Vegetables and fruits have high water content and will lower your water requirement. Monitor your weight daily, and check for edema of lower extremities and lung congestion.

- Eliminate animal products.
- If you are taking any medication, please talk to your doctor before and after changing your diet, as reducing medication may be necessary. A plant based diet is so effective that a reduction in medications will most often be needed to prevent the risks of over-medicating. Blood pressure, serum electrolytes, renal function, and glucose need to be monitored closely.

Exercise

Moderate exercise has been shown to be helpful with heart failure patients. Workouts need to be customized for each patient. Exercise tolerance must be increased slowly. Yoga and walking are ideal.

Tobacco cessation

Tobacco use increases risk of cardiovascular disease including CHF. Quitting smoking, even for as little as two years, has a significant beneficial effect on morbidity and mortality in patients with heart failure or atherosclerosis.

Q. Can congestive heart failure and arterial fibrillation be reversed?

A. It depends on the cause. If it's caused by something such as hyperthyroidism, then reversal is possible, but, if it is related to coronary artery disease, hypertension or heart valve problems, the heart chambers enlarge and often scar, making complete reversal less likely. A PLANT-BASED diet with targeted supplementation reduces inflammation, lowers blood pressure, and reduces the propensity for arrhythmias and clot formation. All of this improves cardiac reserve and function over time.

Q. What about eating nuts... I thought they were high in nutrients.

A. As nuts are a rich source of saturated fats, my preference is no nuts for heart disease clients. That also eliminates peanuts and peanut butter even though peanuts are officially a legume. For those with established heart disease to add more saturated fat that is in nuts is inappropriate. For people with no heart disease who want to eat nuts and avocado and are able to achieve a cholesterol of 150 and LDL of 80 or under without cholesterol lowering drugs, some nuts and avocado are acceptable. Chestnuts are the one nut, very low in fat, it is ok to eat. A few nuts here and there of any type might be ok.

Q. What about my results on the BOSTON HEART PANEL by Cardio Doc ran on me?

A. Dissecting your blood cells into tiny particles is NOT going to teach you a darn thing. And certainly putting your cholesterol under a microscope to see the size

of every little tine particle in the fat still boils down to ... **FAT** in your blood. So stop putting so much **FAT** in your body through your diet!!!

If your “particle sizes” seem too large even though there is an improvement in overall cholesterol... consider looking at the types of fat and exercise that you are ingesting and doing and possibly add in a bit more NAC (N-A-C is a form of the essential amino acid cysteine, something used by the body to make glutathione (GSH), one of the body’s most important antioxidants) to your supplement regimen. N-A-C prevents LDL-cholesterol (“bad” cholesterol) from being oxidized and causing inflammatory damage to the blood vessels. N-A-C lowers the levels of homocysteine, which prevents the buildup of plaque in the arteries. The lower the homocysteine, the less likelihood of arterial blockage. N-A-C is also the most effective natural remedy that lowers the blood levels of lipoprotein a (Lp(a)).

Elevated levels of Lipoprotein(a) can also be impacted by including CoQ10 into your daily regimen. CoQ10 is an antioxidant well known for its cardiovascular health supporting benefits. It reduces serum levels of lipoprotein(a), with reductions of 31% compared to 8.2% with placebos. CoQ10 has been shown to improve endothelial function and in other studies to reduce LDL oxidation as well as systolic and diastolic blood pressure in patients with diabetic tendencies. The best FORM of CoQ10 to take is “Ubiquinol” which is a “reduced form” of CoQ10. This form not only absorbs up to 8X better and has demonstrated unprecedented anti-aging effects when compared to the cheaper Ubiquinone form of CoQ10.

Exactly which diet plan should you be following to lower your cholesterol for your overall health and improve particle sizes? A whole food plant based zero or low oil lifestyle is PROVEN to reduce cholesterol, improve particle size and prevent almost all cardiovascular diseases and in many cases reverse them.

We also know that if your hormones (thyroid, sex and adrenal) are NOT optimized then your body will not move the fats out of the cells. Working with a functional holistic or medical doctor or practitioner who is well versed in optimizing and balancing hormones naturally is called for to ensure you are being tested & managed correctly.

Look... it’s not hard... your body is not “lacking” statin drugs. You do NOT need medication to lower or manage cholesterol...

Stick with the basics. Eat right. Breathe. Move the body. Balance and optimize your hormones naturally. Then remove assholes from your life and you will prevent most diseases, feel great and have a VERY strong & healthy cardiovascular system.

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