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Issue # 3

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Heart Health and the Holidays

With the abundance of delicious foods, plenty of 'cheer' and undoubtedly a bit of stress mixed in, it is a good time to treat your cardiovascular system with some extra TLC.

"Find a healthy balance and practice moderation." the Wise (wo)man said.

Data from studies over the last 20 years on the top 15 conditions - yes heart disease (HD) is in the top 3 - indicates that diets high in meat, dairy and eggs, equaled an increase in degenerative disease. Luckily HD responds very well to a healthy diet rich in *antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, fiber, phytonutrients and healthy fats*. Wise lifestyle choices such as smoking cessation, a healthy



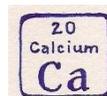
body weight, regular exercise, minimal alcohol intake, stress reduction, monitoring blood sugar levels and reducing exposure to toxins will all help to improve your body's ability to be healthy. And let's not forget that extra TLC by practicing forgiveness, being less critical of self and others, being open to love, and experiencing joy.

So what are antioxidants? These help to protect cells and arterial walls from oxidative stress caused by free radicals (FR) or damaged fats and reduce the risk of atherosclerosis. Some FR activity is good, but excesses from poor lifestyle choices can cause damage to healthy tissue. Some vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals, the elements that provide colour, flavor and aroma to foods, have potent antioxidant properties. Natural, whole foods provide the best synergistic combination of these elements along with fiber that *boost the immune system, ward off free radical damage and reduce inflammation*.

This holiday consume all the colours of the rainbow, fresh and organic if possible, raw or lightly cooked, **every day**. Be sure to include dark berries, apples, pineapple, papaya, avocados, tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, celery, beets, turnips and their greens along with other greens for qualities that help *prevent LDL oxidation, improve HDL, reduce high blood pressure, balance blood sugar levels and ultimately reduce your risk of HD*. Include legumes, dried peas and beans, for similar benefits with the added bonus of being low in calories. When combined with whole grains, nuts or seeds, they are an excellent source of fiber and provide a good alternate to meat.

Tidbits A to Z

Calcium is an essential mineral found in many foods. Only 1 tblsp of blackstrap molasses provides 137 mg, almost as much as ½ cup whole cow's milk. Soy beans contain the highest of the dried beans at 230 mg and ½ cup almonds have even more. Sesame seeds have a whopping 1200 mg in the same amount. Nut butters or nut milk are therefore also good sources. Other green foods and vegetables also contain some smaller amounts of calcium.



Candida Albicans is a form of parasitic yeast-like fungus in the body. An overgrowth or Candidiasis, may occur in the intestines, mouth, throat, genital tract, skin or nails as a result of poor diet, antibiotic use or lack of beneficial micro-flora in the gut. This is NOT just a woman's issue. Craving simple carbohydrates or sugars, fatigue, white tongue, brain fog, athlete's foot or skin irritations are a few of the possible symptoms.

Cosmetics and many other personal care products contain ingredients that are NOT beneficial to health. Watch for parabens, petrolatum, formaldehyde (often hidden under other names) and phthalates hidden in 'fragrance', to name a few. For more information visit www.safecosmetics.org or www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/resources for a shoppers guide.



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For extra heart healthy benefits, include 'treats' that contain oat bran, wheat germ or buckwheat. Use moderation when it comes to high calorie nuts, choose unsalted. Walnuts contain extra healthy Omega 3 fats as do flax, hemp and chia seeds, cold water fish such as salmon or sardines and canola or soybean oil (look for organic/non-gmo). I do not recommend the use of margarine made with the latter two. Fat is a topic I always cover with my clients and will be discussing in a future newsletter.

Tis the 'season' for those savory flavor boosters – sage, rosemary, thyme and their antioxidant benefits, ½ tsp/day of ginger is said to boost the strength of the heart muscle, 1 clove garlic /day improves peripheral circulation and turmeric contains curcumin which helps prevent clots and reduces inflammation.

Just remember to treat yourself with TLC - moderate your intake of sugars, rich creams, dips and gravy, drink plenty of water and get some fresh air with family and friends. *Best wishes to all for a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

Recipe of the Month

Cocoa Date Balls

Make these in about 15 minutes for a yummy treat that provides some fiber, healthy fat and natural sweetness.

Simmer 1 cup of dates in a small amount of water until soft. Mash
Stir in 1 cup of oatmeal, 1 tbsp coconut oil, cook for 1 minute.

(May use certified gluten free oats)

Remove from heat and cool.

Mash in 1 ripe banana and add

1 heaping tsp cocoa

2 heaping tbsp tapioca starch

1 tsp cinnamon, large pinch of cloves

Roll 1 inch balls in organic unsweetened shredded coconut.



Q&A

What are the benefits of flax and how is it best included in my diet? B.M.

Also known as linseed, flax is a good source of soluble and insoluble fiber, Essential Fatty Acids (over 50% Omega 3), and lignans that are beneficial to health. It aids in reducing 'bad' cholesterol, maintaining a healthy colon, thinning the blood, reducing inflammation and may help prevent excess estrogen related cancers. No wonder producers are jumping on the bandwagon and including flax in breads, crackers and other items. BUT eating whole flax seeds will "likely come out the way the went in", and the delicate EFA's are sensitive to heat and light, limiting their shelf life. Oxidized fats are implicated in poor arterial health. Buy your own whole seed, transfer into a glass jar. In a coffee grinder prepare only enough meal to use within a week, store in an airtight container in the fridge. I prefer the meal to be lightly roasted, easily stirred in a pan on low for 5 minutes or added to hot cereal in the last few minutes of cooking. Consume 1-2 tbsp/day by sprinkling on yogurt and berries, adding to your smoothie, ganola mix or tossed into grain salads.

Foods That Harm, Foods That Heal. Readers Digest Association Inc., 2004

Prescription for Nutritional Healing, 5th Edition, Phyllis A. Balch, Penguin Group Inc, 2010

Staying Healthy with Nutrition, Elson M. Haas, Random House, 2006