

Healing Alternatives in Heart Disease Treatment

Every year in the United States more people die from heart disease than any other reason. It is estimated that some at least one out of every three of us will die from a heart-related condition, and that currently 60 million people suffer from cardiovascular disease. As a result, the medical cost of cardiovascular disease in the United States exceeds \$56 billion a year. Despite these costs, the war against heart disease is being lost by conventional medicine. The old paradigm of medications to control blood pressure and heart rate, as well as surgery in the form of angioplasties and heart bypass is giving way to exciting new options in the field of alternative and complementary health care.

It is now well understood that the major causes of cardiovascular disease are poor nutritional habits and psychological stress. Is it any wonder that Americans suffer from this disease more than any other nation when you examine the dietary habits and social stresses of this nation. The western diet of junk foods, preservatives, fast foods, animal products, alcohol, sugars and white flour places a great stress on our bodies. This coupled with the constant emphasis on financial gain and success, and you are left with a nation that is leading the world in heart disease deaths despite the large amount of technology it possesses.

I don't mean this article to be a "gloom and doom" piece, but I do want to point out exactly how big a threat this problem is in our society. The good news about heart disease is that if you examine its causes, you see that everyday we can make better choices to control it. Each and every person has the ability to prevent and even reverse heart disease in their bodies, but to do so you have to do something much harder than taking your blood pressure pill or your beta-blocker, you have to make a change in your lifestyle.

Dietary Habits- since elevated cholesterol levels have been linked to heart disease and plaque formation on the insides of the arteries, you should avoid foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol. These foods include red meats, cheeses, cow's milk, butter, egg yolks, shellfish, fried foods, ice cream, hydrogenated oils, and animal products in general. High calorie foods should also be reduced since they can result in obesity, which is another risk factor for cardiovascular disease. This includes cookies, candies, refined white flour products, cakes, chocolates and junk foods. You should increase the amount of whole raw foods in your diet such as vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts and beans. You should also increase the amount of essential fatty acids in your diet, which have been proven to reduce the bad (LDL) cholesterol and increase the good (HDL) cholesterol. This includes cold pressed oils as well as fish oils especially salmon, mackerel, trout, halibut, tuna, and herring. These foods are rich in Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids.

It is also important that you try to eliminate completely toxins that are harmful to the circulatory system and the rest of the body. These toxins include cigarette smoke, marijuana, alcohol and caffeine.

Nutritional Supplementation- in addition to making the necessary dietary changes, these specific nutritional supplements have been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease.

- **Antioxidants-** Vitamins A, C, E and Selenium. Antioxidants help fight against free radical damage to the heart and arteries. Vitamin A in the form of beta-carotene should be 25,000 IU/day. Vitamin C can be taken to bowel tolerance or about 3-10 grams per day. Vitamin E intake should start with 200 IU per day and increase gradually to 1,000 IU. If you are taking an anticoagulant you should limit vitamin E intake to 200 IU/day. If you are pregnant keep the vitamin A consumption to 10,000 IU/day. Selenium deficiency has been linked to heart disease, so it is recommended that 200-300 mcg be supplemented daily.
- **B- Complex-** Important for preventing platelet aggregation and oxidation of cholesterol. There have been numerous studies illustrating the effectiveness of B vitamins in the prevention and treatment of heart disease.
- **Co-Enzyme Q10-** this powerful antioxidant strengthens the heart muscle and energizes the circulatory system by improving tissue oxygenation. It is recommended in the literature that 100 mg be taken daily.
- **Essential Fatty Acids-** If eating fish is not your thing, then you may supplement these nutrients with various oils. Good sources of Omega-3 fatty acids include salmon oil, flax oil or linseed oil. Omega-6 fatty acids may be found in borage oil, evening primrose oil, and black currant oil. You should supplement a 2:1 ratio of Omega-3 to Omega-6.
- **Calcium/Magnesium-** these minerals are essential for proper heart muscle tone and function. They have also been associated with preventing arrhythmias, calcification of blood vessels and platelet aggregation.

- Garlic and Ginger- both have been found to help the body dissolve blood clots. They also help fight infection, lower blood pressure and strengthen the heart muscle.
- L-Carnitine- essential for the transport of fat, this amino acid can help mobilize unwanted fat stores, which are a predisposing factor in heart disease.

These nutritional supplements are just some of the many that are important in combating heart disease and are no substitute for good dietary habits. They are also not the end-all when it comes to fighting cardiovascular disease. Along with proper nutrition, you must add regular exercise and stress reduction to your daily routine. With the combination of these health care principles, you can reduce the chances of becoming the latest casualty in the war against heart disease.

Dr. Bernie Sengstock is a licensed Chiropractor in the State of New York and has completed 300 hours of post-doctorate studies in the field of Chiropractic Rehabilitation. His office is located at Spinecare- 369 East Main Street, East Islip. For more information on heart disease prevention and treatment join us for our free seminar on Saturday February 6,1999 at 12:00 noon. Call 277-0060 for reservations and information.

Heart Disease Prevention and Treatment- Saturday February 6,1999 at 12:00 noon. Free lecture brought to you by Dr. Bernie Sengstock and Dr. Steve Geanopulos. Topics discussed will include the neurological basis of heart disease as well as specific dietary modifications and nutritional supplementation programs. Please call Spinecare at 277-0060 for more information and reservations.