

NutraLiving


The online newsletter dedicated to health, wellness and living your best life - *naturally.*


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In this issue:


- Myths & misconceptions about **heart disease** and women
- Why some foods don't have a nutrition facts table
- The health benefits of ch-ch-ch-**chia!**
- **Recipe:** Herb-rubbed pork tenderloin and roasted cauliflower
- 3 simple **food swaps** for a healthy heart
- Seasonal superfood: **Brussels sprouts**

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Women and heart disease: Do you know your risk?

February is Heart Month in Canada, and while most of us are familiar with the risk factors and prevention strategies associated with cardiovascular disease, many are not aware that cardiovascular disease is the *number one cause of death* in women. Heart disease and stroke claimed 34 995 Canadian women's lives in 2007 alone, and is responsible for more than seven times as many deaths as breast cancer.

Cardiovascular disease has traditionally been viewed as a man's disease, leading to many misunderstandings and misconceptions about women and heart health. Here, we separate the facts from the myths and provide up-to-date heart disease information for women of all ages.

There are many important differences between men and women that influence a person's risk for developing heart disease. It was previously thought that men and women show different heart attack warning signs, but the reality is that people of both genders have reported abnormal chest pain, sweating, nausea and arm pain when experiencing a heart attack. Women, however, may be less likely than men to recognize and report symptoms of heart attack and stroke and may describe signs of pain in a different way. And, unlike men,

women face a number of key life stages such as pregnancy and menopause that can increase their risk for developing a heart condition.

Before menopause, the female hormones estrogen and progesterone help to protect against heart disease. This does not mean that premenopausal females are immune to cardiovascular disease development. Instead, it helps to explain why postmenopausal women are at greater risk, as levels of these hormones fall significantly after menopause. Reaching menopause before age 40 is also a significant risk factor. However, premenopausal women with additional risk factors such as diabetes can still have a high risk of heart disease—in many cases, as high as men of the same age.

Contrary to popular belief, the use of low-dose oral contraceptives has not been shown to increase heart disease risk in healthy women under age 30, or in women who do not smoke and who have no other cardiovascular disease risk factors. However, women who smoke and take oral contraceptives have an increased risk of coronary heart disease.

Certain conditions associated with pregnancy can also increase



a woman's likelihood of developing heart disease, particularly gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia (a condition in pregnant women mainly characterized by increased blood pressure). While these pregnancy-related health concerns may not be entirely preventable, it is important to monitor their progression as part of routine prenatal care as well as for the best possible cardiovascular care.

(Continued on page 2)

9 in 10
Number of
Canadians who have
at least one risk factor
for heart disease
or stroke.

Source: Tracking Heart Disease and Stroke in Canada. Released June 2009.

(Women and heart disease, continued from page 1)

Women may have additional heart disease risk factors to worry about compared to men, but the fact remains that heart disease is a significant health concern for all Canadians. Certain risk factors including age, gender, ethnicity and family history are beyond your control,

but many other factors can be prevented and managed to reduce your chances of developing cardiovascular disease.

Risk factors within your control include diet, diabetes, high blood pressure, excessive alcohol use, smoking, high blood cholesterol, overweight and obesity, physical inactivity and stress. Taking steps to live a more active life-

style and eat a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in sodium and sugar can go a long way.

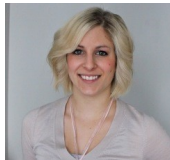
Knowing and understanding the risk factors unique to women can lead to effective prevention and treatment strategies for heart disease.

To learn more about heart dis-

ease and women, visit the Heart & Stroke Foundation website (www.heartandstroke.com) and The Heart Truth Campaign website (www.thehearttruth.ca).

Sources: Heart & Stroke Foundation; Heart & Stroke Foundation's The Heart Truth; National Institutes of Health: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Womenshealth.gov

Ask Jenny: Natural Health Products



Jennifer Molnar, M.Sc., a nutritional scientist at NDI, an-

swers all your burning questions about the not-so-straightforward world of natural health products (a.k.a. dietary supplements).

Q: Why don't certain foods, like vitamin drinks, have a nutrition facts table on the label? I thought this was mandatory in Canada. Kevin E., London, ON

A: Although there are some exceptions to the rule (i.e., alcoholic beverages; fresh produce with no added ingredients; raw, single-ingredient meats; individual servings of food sold for im-

mediate consumption, etc.), you're correct that pre-packaged foods must bear a Nutrition Facts Table (NFT) on the label in Canada.

In its most basic form, the NFT lists the amounts of calories, fat (saturated and trans), cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates (sugars and fibre), protein, calcium, iron and vitamins A and C per serving. This information can help consumers make healthy food choices based on their personal dietary needs.

However, the *Food & Drug Regulations* allow some food-type products, like the vitamin drinks you mentioned, to be classified as **natural health products** rather than foods. This has to do with what the product contains as well as its intended use, for-

mat and public perception/history of use.

What this means is that a product that may *appear* to be a food upon first glance—for instance, those vitamin beverages look and taste like regular fruit drinks—may have actually been legally classified as a natural health product prior to sale.

Why is this important? Well, according to the *Natural Health Product Regulations*, natural health products are *not* required to have an NFT. Instead, a list of medicinal and non-medicinal ingredients is required on the label. This is why some products are missing the important nutritional information included in an NFT.

If you're unsure about a product,



look for the 8-digit Natural Product Number (NPN)—it means that the product is a natural health product and has been approved for sale by the Natural Health Products Directorate of Health Canada. An 8-digit Exemption Number (EN) is also a good sign—it signifies that the product is low-risk but has temporary market access until it has been fully reviewed by the government.

Source: Health Canada



HOT INGREDIENT

Chia (chi · a) seeds

What is it? Perhaps best known as the starter seeds for fuzzy green Chia Pets, chia seeds—derived from the plant *Salvia hispanica*—are a rich source of dietary omega-3 fatty acids.

What does it do? Alpha-linoleic acid, the primary type of omega-3 found in chia, is an essential fatty

acid that has been reported to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Is it safe? While there is limited safety evidence for chia, the grain has been administered to humans in a number of studies with no adverse effects. Chia is currently classified as a natural health product substance by the Natural Health Products Directorate of Health Canada.

Sources: Diabetes Care; Health Canada; Natural Standard; NutraIngredients-USA

Feature Recipe: Herb-Rubbed Pork Tenderloin with Oven Roasted Cauliflower

This warming, protein-packed winter meal is extremely simple to prepare yet looks impressive. If you do not wish to use pork, substitute 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts. Serves 4.

For cauliflower:

Ingredients

Cauliflower, a cruciferous vegetable, contains glucosinolates which may help prevent cold and flu.

- 1 large head cauliflower, trimmed and cut into florets
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

Tip: The cauliflower and pork can be cooked in the oven together at the same temperature.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Toss the cauliflower in the olive oil and spread out in a single layer on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast, turning half-way through cooking, until the cauliflower is caramelized on the outside and fork-tender, about 40 mins. Remove from the oven and keep warm.

For the pork:

Ingredients

- 2 pork tenderloins



Pork tenderloin is one of the leanest cuts of meat available. One serving (2½ oz, or ½ cup) contains just 108 calories and 2 g of fat and provides 21 g of protein as well as iron, potassium and magnesium.

- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ tsp each dried basil, parsley, rosemary and thyme
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 handful fresh flat-leaf parsley

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F if not already done for the cauliflower. In a large bowl, combine the olive oil, dried

herbs, garlic, salt and pepper. Add the pork to the bowl and rub the mixture all over. Place in a baking dish and roast for about 30 minutes.

The pork is ready when juices run clear when pierced, or when a meat thermometer reads 160°F. The pork should be slightly pink inside. Transfer to cutting board and tent with foil; let meat rest for 5-10 minutes. Slice, sprinkle with fresh parsley and serve with the cauliflower.

Add some colour (and nutrients!) to your plate with slices of **red bell pepper**—it contains vitamin C and carotenoids.

Sources: Health Canada; Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology

In Season Now: *Brussels Sprouts*

Don't let the cold weather discourage you from eating your veggies! Winter greens such as Brussels sprouts are in abundance this time of year. These small, leafy orbs are not only bursting with health-boosting nutrients—particularly **vitamin C**, **folate**, **potassium** and **beta-carotene**—they also contain **glucosinolates**, active plant compounds that have potential anticancer and immune-boosting properties.

Try versatile Brussels sprouts in stir-fries and casseroles, or simply toss halved sprouts in olive oil, season with salt and pepper and roast until caramelized.

Sources: Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry; Pharmacological Research.



Words of wisdom: 3 simple, heart-healthy food swaps to make today

Instead of...

Fatty cuts of meat, processed meats and non-lean ground meats

Fried seafood like English-style fish 'n' chips and shrimp tempura

White carbohydrates: breads, pastas, rice and pizza crust

...try:

Lean cuts of beef, skinless chicken breast or pork tenderloin, or plant-based proteins like tofu and beans

Poached salmon with oven-roasted vegetables or shrimp and vegetable stir-fry

Whole grain versions of your favourites, or quinoa, amaranth and millet



We want to hear from you!

If you have a question or comment, or would like to see a certain topic covered in the next issue, we're all ears! Simply send us an email (newsletter@nutrasource.ca) or connect with us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.



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