

The Latest about Heart Health

High cholesterol has been cited and blamed for years, as well. But, a growing amount of evidence indicates that high cholesterol, alone, is not enough to increase a person's risk of atherosclerosis. First of all, the fats must be oxidized or hardened. Most fats and cholesterol move through the bloodstream quickly, too quickly to become oxidized. Dietary fats are broken down by enzymes. Cholesterol is converted to bile. Everything travels along relatively quickly.

There is always new information coming out about how to protect our heart health and reduce our risk of age-related diseases like atherosclerosis, also known as hardening of the arteries. The importance of being physically active is not news, but the role played by calcium and trans-fats in the bloodstream is news, to many people. For heart health, it is best to avoid trans-fat, which is why you will now see it listed in the nutrition facts of foods containing it. You can also read the ingredients label and look for partially hydrogenated oils, of any type.

If you see the ingredient, there are trans-fatty acids in the product, even if they are not listed on the nutrition facts. Food manufacturers are not required to list the amount of trans-fatty acids if they are present in very small amounts. Because trans-fatty acids are not metabolized by the body's enzymes, they stay in the bloodstream longer, which makes it more likely that they will become oxidized or hardened.

Calcium is essential for bone development and regular intake is recommended for the prevention of osteoporosis. But when calcium is consumed, other nutrients, especially vitamin K2 must be present. Vitamin K2's job is to insure that the calcium ends up in the right places and does not adhere to the walls of the arteries. One of the questions that many people have about heart health has to do with whether or not the plaques can be dissolved. We know more now than we did in years past about the healthiest diets. So, 10 years ago, we may have been eating the wrong things.

There are nutrients, including enzymes, which can help clean out the arteries. If you're interested in heart health, you might want to learn more about them.