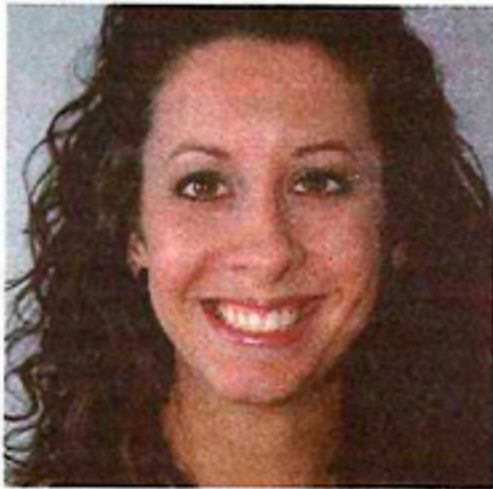


HEALTHY HEART

HOW TO SUPPLEMENT A GOOD DIET

Supplements have long been used by people who want to promote their own heart health. **NAOMI BEINART**, a medical nutritionist, explains some of the less well known supplements and their benefits.



'Vitamin K2 has been shown to lead to a reduction in coronary heart disease'

NAOMI BEINART
Medical Nutritionist

L-CARNITINE

Fatty acids are the primary source of fuel for the heart. Carnitine is required for the transport of fatty acids into the mitochondria, where they are metabolised into energy, and is a crucial factor in the maintenance of heart health.

Carnitine deficiency has been identified in a number of heart conditions, including angina, arrhythmia and cardiovascular disease.

RESVERATROL

Recent studies at Harvard Medical School have shown that resveratrol may help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. It has mild blood-thinning properties and may reduce inflammation, a factor in heart disease. It may also help prevent oxidation damage to cholesterol, an early step in the development of heart disease.

Researchers at Harvard also car-

ried out a small study of men with type 2 diabetes, and found that resveratrol reduced fasting blood sugar and improved insulin sensitivity.

Improved insulin sensitivity can affect vascular health by reducing glycation and excessive cholesterol production.

VITAMIN K2

In studies, Vitamin K2 has been shown to lead to a reduction in coronary heart disease. A Netherlands study followed 4,800 healthy men and women for ten years. It found vitamin K2 reduced the risk of coronary heart disease mortality by 50 per cent.

D-RIBOSE

D-Ribose improves oxygen utilisation efficiency in congestive heart failure patients. This is very important because the efficiency of oxy-

gen utilisation is a strong predictor of morbidity and mortality.

In one study of 20 men (aged 45 to 69 years) with severe coronary artery disease and a history of angina induced by normal daily activities, 60 grams of ribose (in four doses of 15 grams each) were tested against placebo. Treated subjects exhibited improvement in ECG readings and reduced time to onset of moderate angina (during exercise testing).

No improvements were noted in the placebo group.

For more information:

Solgar Vitamin & Herb supplements are sold through independent health food stores. Call 01442 890 355 for a local stockist. www.solgar-vitamins.co.uk

Coenzyme Q10

Q10 promotes overall cardiovascular health, and studies suggest it is very effective in reducing blood pressure. Q10 is needed for energy production in the heart muscle, and is frequently deficient in those with cardiovascular disease. Although relatively abundant in food, Q10 tends to decline with age and is adversely affected by statin medication, so supplementation may be important for those with cardiovascular issues.

Q10 is a favourite of doctors. Dr Chris Steele is a family GP and resident expert on *This Morning*. He says: "I've taken Q10 for years. It's vital for energy production and, as you get older, it becomes very important to top it up if you want to feel younger and keep active for longer."

And he warns: "Lots of people also take statins to control cholesterol, but they can drain you of Q10. If you are complaining of tiredness you may need a Q10 supplement."

For more information about Coenzyme Q10 call FREE on 0800 591 756 or go to www.q10.co.uk.

THE NATURAL BENEFITS OF BEETROOT

Can you imagine the juice in your glass every morning being beetroot rather than the more usual orange or grapefruit?

Recently published and much reported research by doctors at St Bartholomew's and the Royal London Hospital found that a daily dose of natural beetroot juice significantly reduced the blood pressure of their healthy volunteers.

Why beetroot juice? Well, beetroot is unusual in that it contains very high levels of nitrate. But how does this nitrate work to lower blood pressure?

"The answer we believe is Nitric Oxide," explains Professor Ben Benjamin. "Bacteria on the surface of our tongue convert the nitrate to a more reactive chemical, nitrite, which when swallowed easily converts to Nitric Oxide."

Nitric Oxide is a powerful substance which is continually made by our blood vessels to keep blood pressure low and prevent blood clots from forming in arteries."

Professor Amrita Ahluwalia, who is leading the ongoing research with beetroot juice, adds: "The magnitude of the blood pressure reduction surprised us all. The results suggest that nitrate in beetroot juice works like a natural aspirin to prevent blood

Beetroot: the new Super Root

Fresh beetroot is enjoying a revival as people are discovering there's more to this great British vegetable than they thought. Beetroot is a versatile vegetable and an ideal component of the Food Standards Agency's recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Beetroot is an excellent source of protein with significant levels of important minerals, vitamins and micronutrients with fairly high quantities of an antioxidant called

clots and protect the lining of blood vessels, as well as having the additional beneficial effect of lowering blood pressure."

You should be aware that the research was based on drinking half a litre of (raw) beetroot juice a day which would require a fair amount of liquidising. If this sounds like too much effort then help is at hand. James White Drinks, the Suffolk based specialist drinks maker behind Beet It, an organic beetroot juice which is available in leading supermarkets as well as Holland & Barrett and independent health shops. "Beetroot juice tastes really good,"

Betalin. Beetroot contains potassium and magnesium as well as a soluble fibre, which can help reduce blood cholesterol. It contains "flavonoids" and "carotenoids" which help prevent "bad" cholesterol from being oxidised and deposited in the arteries.

Don't be concerned if after eating beetroot, or drinking beetroot juice your urine turns pink! It's the red pigment which harmlessly passes through the digestive system.

explains Lawrence Mallinson, of James White Drinks. "When we first started making a beetroot juice none of the recent remarkable research findings had been published. Tasting great was all that mattered. All this science has just come along as a terrific surprise."

James White Drinks is a Suffolk-based English apple juice presser. Starting with single-variety juices (Bramley, Cox and Russet), it now makes a large range of both classic and organic fruit and vegetable juices which, in addition to its Beet It organic beetroot juice, also includes Big Tom spicy tomato juice for which it was granted a Royal Warrant.