

WARREN COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT WEIGHT MANAGEMENT CLASS

AUGUST 5, 2019

CHOLESTEROL – REDUCING FOODS!

IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY HISTORY OF HIGH CHOLESTEROL, YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO AVOID MEDICATION - BUT IF YOUR GOAL IS TO CONTROL THIS CONDITION WITH DIET, I HAVE A FEW SUGGESTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP! EVEN IF YOU ARE ALREADY ON A STATIN, YOU STILL NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU PUT IN YOUR MOUTH! WE ALL HAVE ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT, RIGHT?

1. **OATS** ACCORDING TO TODAY'S LITERATURE, SWITCHING UP YOUR BREAKFAST TO CONTAIN *TWO SERVINGS* OF OATS CAN LOWER LDL ("BAD" CHOLESTEROL) BY 5.3 PERCENT IN ONLY SIX WEEKS! THE KEY TO THIS EFFECT IS BETA-GLUCAN, A SUBSTANCE IN OATS THAT ABSORBS LDL – WHICH YOUR BODY THEN EXCRETES.

I ALWAYS LIKE TO BREAK THIS KIND OF INFORMATION DOWN INTO PRACTICAL ADVICE, AS IN "SO...HOW MUCH OATMEAL DO I NEED TO EAT TO HAVE THIS AFFECT?" WELL, ACCORDING TO A WEBSITE CALLED *TODAY'S DIETITIAN*, ONE-AND-A –HALF CUPS WILL PROVIDE THE EFFECTIVE AMOUNT OF BETA GLUCANS, WHICH IS 3 GRAMS. THAT SEEMS LIKE A LOT, CONSIDERING IT ALSO PROVIDES 249 CALORIES (THAT'S COOKED, NOT RAW). BARLEY IS ACTUALLY A BETTER SOURCE OF THIS SUBSTANCE; YOU'D "ONLY" HAVE TO EAT ONE CUP OF (COOKED) BARLEY FOR 2.5 GRAMS. THIS AMOUNT WEIGHS IN AT 193 CALORIES. IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE HASN'T BEEN AS MUCH RESEARCH ON BARLEY AS A SOURCE OF BETA GLUCANS AS THERE HAS BEEN ON OATMEAL. ALSO, IT IS BETTER ABSORBED WHEN EATEN IN LIQUID (AS IN A BOWL OF OATMEAL) RATHER THAN WHEN IT'S BAKED IN BREAD OR COOKIES. (DARN!)

MY TAKE ON THIS INFO? CHANGING YOUR HABITS ISN'T A SPRINT, IT'S MORE OF A MARATHON! IF YOU ENJOY OATMEAL, A SERVING A DAY WILL DEFINITELY HAVE SOME OF THE RESULTS YOU'RE SEEKING. IT MAY NOT LOWER YOUR CHOLESTEROL AS QUICKLY AS EATING THE STUDIED "TWO SERVINGS A DAY," BUT COMBINED WITH OTHER HEALTHY CHOICES, IT WILL EVENTUALLY SHOW UP IN YOUR BLOOD WORK. LIKEWISE WITH THE BARLEY...I DO COOK WITH THIS GRAIN, BUT A CUP AT A TIME? SEEMS LIKE A PRETTY BIG SERVING TO ME!

2. **RED WINE** DRINKING A MODERATE AMOUNT OF RED WINE HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN TO LOWER LDL, AND ALSO BENEFIT THE HEART BY MAINTAINING CLEAR AND FLEXIBLE ARTERIES, WHICH PROMOTES HEALTHY BLOOD FLOW. NOW, FOR SOME PEOPLE A DAY WITHOUT WINE IS LIKE A DAY WITHOUT SUNSHINE! BUT WHAT IF YOU DON'T LIKE WINE, OR IF YOU'RE A

TEETOTALER? CAN YOU GET THE SAME EFFECT FROM GRAPE JUICE – OR BETTER YET, FROM EATING GRAPES? FROM WHAT I RESEARCHED (A.K.A. FROM WHAT I GOOGLED!) THE ANSWER IS YES! THERE ARE SEVERAL PHYTONUTRIENTS IN GRAPES, AND SOME OF THESE SUB-GROUPS OF CHEMICALS (YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE TERM POLYPHENOLS, FOR EXAMPLE) ARE ESPECIALLY CONCENTRATED IN THE SKINS AND SEEDS OF CERTAIN TYPES OF GRAPES. THE BEST SOURCES APPEAR TO BE CONCORD GRAPES AND A WHITE, SEEDED COUSIN NAMED “NIAGRA.” I LOOKED IT UP, AND BOTH THESE ALSO COME IN SEEDLESS FORM.

NOW YOU MIGHT BE THINKING, WHAT IF I CAN’T BUY CONCORD GRAPES? REMEMBER WHEN I USED THE TERM “PHYTONUTRIENTS?” PHYTO = PLANT-BASED. IN OTHER WORDS, CONCORD AND NIAGRA MAY BE ESPECIALLY HIGH IN THESE COMPOUNDS, BUT IT DOESN’T MEAN THAT OTHER GRAPES DON’T HAVE THEM AT ALL! (FOR THAT MATTER, ALL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES CONTAIN “PHYTO-NUTRIENTS!”) EAT THE GRAPES THAT ARE AVAILABLE, IF YOU LIKE GRAPES.

I CALLED WELCH’S TO ASK IF THE LIGHT GRAPE JUICE CONTAINS THE SAME NUTRIENTS AS REGULAR. THE ANSWER IS YES – JUST TO A LESSER DEGREE, SINCE “LIGHT” BASICALLY MEANS “WATERED DOWN!” EAT GRAPES, DRINK SOME GRAPE JUICE...IT’S ALL GOOD!

3. **SALMON – AND OTHER FATTY FISH** OMEGA-3 FATS ARE ONE OF THE HEALTH WONDERS OF THE WORLD! THEY’VE BEEN SHOWN TO WARD OFF HEART DISEASE AND DEMENTIA. IN FACT, ACCORDING TO RESEARCH FROM LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY, REPLACING SATURATED FATS WITH OMEGA-3s SIMILAR TO THOSE FOUND IN SALMON, SARDINES AND HERRING CAN RAISE HDL (“GOOD” CHOLESTEROL) AS MUCH AS 4 PERCENT!

SO, OTHER THAN EATING FISH (I REALLY LIKE SALMON, BUT HERRING OR SARDINES? PASS!) HOW CAN YOU ADD OMEGA-3s TO YOUR DIET? TUNA IS ALSO FAIRLY GOOD SOURCE, BUT IT’S NOT ALWAYS LISTED. THERE ARE MANY FOODS FORTIFIED WITH OMEGA-3s, SO AS ALWAYS, READ YOUR LABELS! EGGS AND MARGARINE COME TO MIND. FLAX AND CHIA SEEDS (AND FLAX SEED OIL) ARE GOOD SOURCES; WE’VE TALKED ABOUT ADDING THOSE THINGS TO YOUR DIET. BOTH CANOLA AND OLIVE OIL ALSO CONTAIN OMEGA-3s.

4. **NUTS** IF YOU SNACK ON NUTS, YOU’RE COVERED. WALNUTS ARE ESPECIALLY HIGH, BUT ANY OLD NUT’LL DO! IN A STUDY PUBLISHED BY *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NUTRITION*, FOLKS WHO ATE 1.5 OUNCES OF WHOLE WALNUTS A DAY SIX DAYS A WEEK FOR A MONTH LOWERED THEIR TOTAL CHOLESTEROL BY 5.4 PERCENT AND LDL CHOLESTEROL BY 9.3 PERCENT! ALMONDS AND CASHEWS ARE OTHER GOOD OPTIONS. WATCH YOUR PORTIONS, THOUGH. NUTS ARE ALSO A GREAT ENERGY SOURCE! (IN OTHER WORDS, PRETTY HIGH IN CALORIES!)
5. **TEA** ACCORDING TO RESEARCH CONDUCTED WITH THE USDA, BLACK TEA HAS BEEN SHOWN TO REDUCE BLOOD LIPIDS BY UP TO 10 PERCENT IN ONLY THREE WEEKS. WOW.

THAT SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING SIMPLE AND INEXPENSIVE ENOUGH TO TRY! (NO, SWEET TEA DOESN'T COUNT!)

6. **BEANS** SO CHEAP, SO HEALTHY! RESEARCHERS AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUND THAT ADDING HALF A CUP OF BEANS TO YOUR SOUP LOWERS TOTAL CHOLESTEROL, INCLUDING LDL, BY UP TO 8 PERCENT. THE KEY TO THIS BENEFIT IS THE FIBER FOUND IN THESE LITTLE GEMS. FIBER BINDS WITH CHOLESTEROL IN DIFFERENT FOODS AND CARRIES IT OUT OF YOUR BODY.

7. **CHOCOLATE!** IN A 2007 STUDY PUBLISHED IN AJCN, PARTICIPANTS WHO WERE GIVEN COCOA POWDER HAD A 24 PERCENT INCREASE IN HDL LEVELS OVER 12 WEEKS, COMPARED WITH A 5 PERCENT INCREASE IN THE CONTROL GROUP. TO HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT, YOU MUST CHOOSE DARK CHOCOLATE – LOOK FOR BRANDS THAT CONTAIN THE LEAST AMOUNT OF INGREDIENTS AND ARE AROUND 70 PERCENT (OR MORE) COCOA.

I DID SOME READING THIS MORNING, AND THE LITERATURE SUGGESTS THAT CACAO POWDER IS EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN COCOA POWDER. (NOT A TYPO!) I'M GOING TO TRY AND FIND SOME AT NOON.

8. **MARGARINE** SWITCHING TO A MARGARINE WITH PLANT STEROLS, SUCH AS PROMISE OR BENECOL, COULD HELP LOWER CHOLESTEROL. PLANT STEROLS ARE COMPOUNDS THAT REDUCE CHOLESTEROL ABSORPTION; A STUDY PUBLISHED IN AJCN FOUND THAT WOMEN WHO HAD A HIGHER PLANT-STEROL BASED DIET WERE ABLE TO LOWER TOTAL CHOLESTEROL BY 3.5 PERCENT.

BUTTER LOVER? PLANT STEROLS ARE ALSO FOUND IN WHOLE GRAINS, LEGUMES, NUTS, AND SEEDS. REMEMBER! BOTH MARGARINE AND BUTTER ARE CONCENTRATED SOURCES OF FAT CALORIES. GO EASY ON THE PORTION!

9. **GARLIC** LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE ABOUT ONE OF MY FAVORITE VEGETABLES! IT'S BEEN FOUND TO PREVENT BLOOD CLOTS, REDUCE BLOOD PRESSURE, AND PROTECT AGAINST INFECTIONS. NOW, RESEARCH FINDS THAT IT ALSO HELPS STOP ARTERY-CLOGGING PLAQUE AT ITS EARLIEST STAGE BY KEEPING CHOLESTEROL PARTICLES FROM STICKING TO YOUR ARTERY WALLS!

I HAVE A GARLIC PRESS, WHICH I USE FREQUENTLY. OBVIOUSLY I USE FRESH GARLIC WITH MY PRESS. BESIDES FRESH, THOUGH, YOU CAN BUY MINCED GARLIC (IN A JAR), DRIED GARLIC, POWDERED, OR GARLIC SALT. (I DOUBT YOU GET THE SAME HEALTH BENEFITS FROM THE LAST TWO FORMS.) I LOVE IT, BUT IT'S PROBABLY AN ACQUIRED TASTE!

10. **OLIVE OIL** A MONOUNSATURATED FAT, THIS OIL HAS THE HEART-HEALTHY EFFECT OF RAISING YOUR HDL. OTHER SOURCES OF MONOUNSATURATES ARE CANOLA AND PEANUT OIL.

REMEMBER: ANOTHER WAY TO RAISE YOUR HDL IS BY EXERCISE. GET MOVING!

11. **SPINACH** REALLY, THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO INCORPORATE SPINACH INTO YOUR MEALS. THIS POPULAR GREEN CONTAINS LOTS OF LUTEIN, WHICH IS A PLANT PIGMENT THAT ACTS AS AN ANTIOXIDANT. IT IS KNOWN ESPECIALLY TO PROMOTE EYE HEALTH.

RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT JUST A MERE HALF CUP OF A LUTEIN-RICH FOOD DAILY ALSO GUARDS AGAINST HEART ATTACKS BY HELPING ARTERY WALLS “SHRUG OFF” CHOLESTEROL INVADERS THAT CAUSE CLOGGING! GOOD SOURCES, BESIDES SPINACH, INCLUDE EGG YOLKS, KIWI FRUIT, GRAPES, CORN, ORANGES, ZUCCHINI (AND OTHER SQUASH), KALE, AND ORANGE PEPPERS. THIS IS KIND OF INTERESTING...ALL THE RESEARCH I FOUND SPECIFIED “COOKED” KALE AND SPINACH; THAT MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE AMOUNT? (COOKING OBVIOUSLY COMPACTS THE GREENS, SO IDK?) ALSO, LUTEIN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DARK RED, ORANGE, AND YELLOW PIGMENTS IN FOOD. FOR THE WISE GUY IN THE CROWD THAT IS INEVITABLY ABOUT TO POINT OUT THAT SPINACH AND KALE ARE GREEN, THE CHLOROPHYLL HIDES THE OTHER COLORS!

12. **AVOCADO** AVOCADOS ARE A GREAT SOURCE OF MUFAs, WHICH WE ALREADY KNOW STANDS FOR MONOUNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS. THIS TASTY FRUIT (YEP, IT’S A FRUIT! I LOOKED IT UP!) ALSO PROVIDES A PLANT STEROL CALLED BETA-SITOSTEROL, WHICH IS A PLANT-BASED FAT THAT REDUCES THE AMOUNT OF CHOLESTEROL ABSORBED FROM FOOD.

BEWARE, THOUGH...SINCE THE MAJORITY OF THE CALORIES IN AN AVOCADO ARE FROM FAT, PROCEED WITH CAUTION!

WHAT THIS ALL BOILS DOWN TO IS THIS: RE-READ THIS LESSON, AND TAKE NOTE OF THE FOODS YOU LIKE AND/OR ARE WILLING TO TRY. INCORPORATE THEM (WISELY!) INTO YOUR DIET. GOING HEAVIER ON THE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD IDEA. NOW YOU JUST HAVE A FEW MORE REASONS TO DO SO!

HOW DID YOU DO WITH “NO SALTY SNACKS?”

OUR “NO!” FOOD FOR THIS WEEK: **NO SALTY SNACKS AGAIN!!!**

