

Supplements and **YOUR HEART**

[By Dr. Narendra Singh, MD, FRCPC FACC FAHA]

One of the most common questions I am asked in my clinic is what supplements do you recommend to protect against heart disease. The answer is both simple...NONE... and complex... depends on what you mean by a supplement.

A landmark study entitled INTERHEART showed that 90% of heart disease risk can be predicted by 9 risk factors. The six risk factors that increased risk include abnormal lipids, smoking, hypertension, diabetes, abdominal obesity, and psychosocial factors. The 3 risk factors that decrease cardiovascular risk include regular physical activity, moderate alcohol intake, and regular consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Many large trials looking at supplements such as vitamin B 12, folic acid, niacin, vitamin C, vitamin E and most recently vitamin D have failed to reduced cardiovascular risk and in some cases increased risk of other complications slightly. The concept of using supplements results from a lifestyle that has become more sedentary and stressful, and a diet that has become more processed and calorie decadent. Supplements are felt to help neutralize these adverse changes.

I would counter that the best supplements one can take come from proper dietary choices. There is ample evidence that antioxidants reduce the risk of heart disease. Finding the right mixture of supplements is more difficult than choosing the right foods such as vegetables rich in flavinoids, (tomatoes, berries, chocolate and even caffeine). The highly touted Mediterranean diets' success is largely in part to the incorporation of such foods.

Another important supplement (dietary choice) are omega-3 fats. The American Heart Association recommends 2 grams of omega 3-containing foods or supplements on a daily basis while eliminating all trans fats.

Multiple studies have shown that alcohol in moderation reduces cardiovascular risk in part by raising good (HDL) cholesterol. This amounts to 1 drink for women and 2 drinks for men daily, without the luxury of saving up all consumption for the weekend! Red wine confers the added benefit of antioxidants such as resveratrol.

Foods rich in dietary fiber and having a low glycemic index (nuts, legumes and whole grains) work by reducing total caloric intake, improving diabetes control, and protecting against both heart disease and cancer risk.

So ...other than a simple multivitamin...the path to a healthier heart is not in supplementing with tablets but rather with a richer choice of food and drinks in your daily lives!



Dr. Narendra Singh, MD FRCPC FACC FAHA studied at the Dalhousie Medical School in Halifax Nova Scotia and went on to complete a residency and cardiology fellowship at the University of Toronto. He is the Director of Clinical Research at Atlanta Heart Specialist.

Preventing Eye Injuries

[by Dr. Mira Sivan]

Experts say more than 90% of eye injuries can be prevented by simply taking a few precautions and wearing safety glasses. Those can be with corrective lenses or without any power. Either way, the lenses have to be made from Polycarbonate or Trivex material.



If you use a lawn mower, leaf-blower, drill or similar power tools, you need protective eyewear. These glasses should have a snug, wrap-style frame to decrease the likelihood of small, airborne particles getting behind the lenses.

WORKPLACE EYE SAFETY PROGRAMS

In U.S. workplaces that involve any kind of airborne particles or noxious chemicals, employers must adhere to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines for protective eyewear and emergency eye care.

Most protective eyewear standards require employers to provide prescription safety lenses to employees who need corrective eyewear.

LASER POINTERS, CHAMPAGNE CORKS AND FIREWORKS

Be careful with household chemicals, since many can burn your eyes. Always wear goggles, read instructions carefully, work in well ventilated areas and make sure the nozzle is pointed away from you.

Always wear appropriate eye protection when playing sports (protective sports eyewear). Have fun in the sun, but always wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays when outdoors for extended times.

Looking directly at the light beam of a laser pointer can cause temporary vision loss and even permanent damage to the retina.

Champagne corks. During a celebration, you're probably not thinking about eye damage. But a flying cork from a bottle of champagne can rupture an eyeball or cause a detached retina, both of which can cause blindness.

NEVER USE FIREWORKS. EVEN SPARKLERS BURN HOT ENOUGH TO MELT GOLD!

Safety is important and taking the necessary precautions to protect your eyes can help you prevent injuries.



Dr. Mira Sivan is an optometrist located at Vickery Village in Cumming. She may be reached at 678-648-5185.