



# Here's To Your Health!

A Phoenix Fire Department Health Center Publication

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A veritable powerhouse of nutritional goodness, the sweet potato is only distantly related to the potato. And don't call it a yam—it's not even the same species! The sweet potato is a flowering perennial vine in the same family as morning glories, with delicious, starchy, tuberous roots. A 4-ounce serving of sweet potato (about 1/2 cup) provides 390% daily value (DV) of vitamin A, 40% DV of vitamin C, 18% DV of fiber and 13% DV of potassium, plus vitamin E, iron, magnesium and phytochemicals like beta carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin, prompting the Center for Science in the Public Interest to call it one of the most nutritious vegetables in the land.

## Cold or Allergies?

Symptom	Cold	Allergy
Cough	Usually	Sometimes
General aches and pains	Sometimes	Never
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes
Itchy eyes	Rarely	Usually
Sneezing	Usually	Usually
Sore throat	Usually	Sometimes
Runny nose	Usually	Usually
Stuffy nose	Usually	Usually
Fever	Rarely	Never

Source: Adapted from National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

## The Self Cleaning Heart

The Fountain of Youth may be fiction, but there really is a magic gene pool in northern Italy. Thirty years ago, researchers discovered that, despite unhealthy cholesterol levels, 40 inhabitants of the village of Limone sul Garda were seemingly immune to heart disease. Turns out it wasn't the famed Mediterranean diet at work, but rather a variation of a protein in HDL cholesterol (the good kind) called ApoA-1 Milano. In less scientific terms, the villagers were born with self-cleaning arteries.

In about 3 years, you won't need to be a son of Limone sul Garda to enjoy the plaque-busting perks of ApoA-1 Milano. You'll probably be able to ask your doctor for a few shots of ETC-216, a synthetic form of HDL modeled after the Italian wonder protein. In a landmark study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Cleveland Clinic researchers found that emergency-room patients who received ETC-216 had an average reduction in arterial plaque of 4.2 percent. This may not sound like much, but according to Steven Nissen, M.D., the lead study author, "that level of reduction of arterial plaque--several weeks of treatment reversing several years' worth of accumulation--is extraordinary and unprecedented."



*Heart* continued on page 3

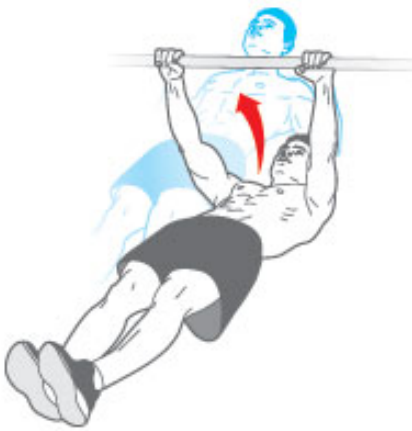
# Build Power Fast With These Four Moves

Perform the exercises in succession, and then rest for 60 seconds before repeating the circuit once or twice



## 1. Barbell Duck-Under

Set a barbell at waist level on the supports of a power cage, and stand with one hip next to it. Take a long stride beneath the bar, then duck underneath. Stand up on the other side, and repeat the motion to return to the starting position. Go back and forth until you've passed under the bar 8 to 10 times in each direction.



## 2. Reverse Pushup

Sit on the floor under the barbell with your legs straight, and grasp the bar with a shoulder-width grip. Hang from the bar so only your heels touch the floor. This is the starting position. Pinch your shoulder blades together and bend your arms to pull your chest to the bar. Pause at your highest point, then lower yourself. Aim for 8 to 10 repetitions.



## 3. Front Squat to Shoulder Press

Load the barbell with a weight you can press overhead 8 times. Holding the bar on the front of your shoulders, bend at the hips and knees. Pause when your thighs are parallel to the floor (or lower), and then press up and push the bar overhead. Lower the bar to your shoulders. Do 8 reps.



## 4. Pullup to Hanging Leg Raise

Grab the pullup bar at the top of the cage with your palms facing away from you. Pull yourself up until your upper chest is as close to the bar as you can get it. Holding that position, bend your legs and bring your knees in toward your chest. Lower your legs, then lower your body to the starting position. Aim for 6 to 8 reps.

Source: Menshealth.com

## Heart continued from page 1

Think you can wait 3 years? You can't. A man with a low HDL-cholesterol level--40 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dl) or lower--can have as much as a three times greater risk of death from heart disease. So unless you're blessed with blood that consistently scores in the mid-40s or higher, you need to do something now. Make that several somethings. "The key to raising HDL levels with lifestyle changes is to do more than one thing," says Daniel J. Rader, M.D., director of the preventive cardiology and lipid clinic at the University of Pennsylvania school of medicine. Our thinking exactly, which is why we've come up with these six strategies for making your HDL its level best.

### **Pop a milk pill, +7 percent**

Strong bones, stronger heart. In a yearlong study published in the American Journal of Medicine, those people who took a daily 1,000-mg calcium supplement saw their HDL-cholesterol levels rise by 7 percent. "Calcium interferes with the absorption of fat from the diet and decreases fat mass in the body, both of which may help raise HDL," says Ian Reid, M.D., the lead researcher. Dairy products are an excellent source of calcium . . . except in this case. "Calcium is probably best ingested as a supplement, at least until there's more research on the HDL-increasing effects of calcium-rich foods," says Dr. Reid. Choose a brand that contains calcium citrate (not coral calcium) and 400 international units of vitamin D for maximum absorption.

### **Build killer quads, +19 percent**

Scientists have always believed that you have to run, cycle, or do other aerobic acrobatics in order for exercise to boost HDL. But when Ohio University researchers studied the impact of weight training on older men, they discovered a surprising side effect: The men who did lower-body work--squats, leg extensions, leg presses--twice a week for 16 weeks raised their HDL levels by 19 percent. "If you add weight training to your exercise routine, you are going to increase your HDL," says Robert Staron, Ph.D., one of the study authors. For legs and HDL levels that are something to look at, follow the lead of the men in the study: Do three sets of six to eight repetitions of the half squat, leg extension, and leg press, resting no more than 2 minutes between sets. Use a weight that's about 85 percent of the amount you can lift just once.

### **Make a date with Mrs. Paul, +26 percent**

Compared with omega-3-rich salmon, whitefish looks like the iceberg lettuce of seafood. However, when Canadian researchers recently compared a steady diet of the stuff with regular consumption of lean beef and chicken, they found that the fish-eating folks experienced a 26 percent increase in HDL2, a particularly protective form of HDL (see "Sizing Up Your HDL," in related articles on right). "Fish protein may increase insulin sensitivity, which in turn can elevate HDL2 cholesterol," says Helene Jacques, Ph.D., one of the study authors. Still, fish sticks aren't health food--unless they're baked, like Healthy Selects Sticks from Mrs. Paul's. Same goes for any other frozen fish: Always choose baked over battered.

### **Learn how to pronounce this word, +15 percent**

"Policosanol" (poly-CO-sanol). This mixture of alcohols derived from sugarcane wax is the rare natural supplement that may actually live up to its hype. "At doses of 10 to 20 mg a day, it can increase HDL by up to 15 percent, which is incredible," says David Maron, M.D., a cardiologist at Vanderbilt University medical center. "I'm amazed it hasn't made more of a splash." One reason may be that most of that research has been done on a brand of policosanol not available in the United States. "A lot of the [U.S.] products don't use sugarcane," says Stephen Sinatra, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Connecticut school of medicine. Instead, they use vegetable or bee waxes. Two domestic exceptions: Source Naturals and Nature's Life, both of which are sold at health-food stores.

Heart continued on page 4

# Heart continued

## **Make your six-pack disappear, +12 percent**

Not your abs, your Amstel lager. Researchers in the Netherlands found that men who drank 2 pints of beer a day increased their HDL levels by 7 percent after only 10 days, and by 12 percent after 3 weeks. "The exact way in which it affects HDL has never really been figured out, but the effect has been observed over and over again," says Norman Kaplan, M.D., a clinical professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas. What's more, says Dr. Kaplan, "beer contains components that reduce homocysteine levels in the blood [a risk factor for heart disease]." Of course, beer does have its limits, as should you--stop at two glasses a day, unless you're celebrating something special, like a triple-digit HDL score.

## **Munch on macadamias, +8 percent**

This Hawaiian native will do even more to keep your heart pumping than getting lei'd by a babe in a grass skirt. In a study of 17 men with high cholesterol, Australian scientists found that when the men replaced 15 percent of their daily calorie intake with macadamia nuts--12 to 16 nuts a day--their HDL levels went up by 8 percent. "Since macadamia nuts contain the highest amount of monounsaturated fat of all nuts, this degree of HDL-raising effect may be unique to them," says Manohar Garg, Ph.D., the study author. And don't worry about your sodium intake; a dozen dry-roasted macadamias contains just 75 mg sodium, a third of what's coating an equivalent pile of peanuts.

Source: Menshealth.com

# Bits and Pieces...



## **Whole Grains May Reduce Risk of Chronic Disease**

A diet high in whole grains may help reduce the risk of developing chronic health problems such as diabetes and heart disease, says a Penn State University study. Previous research found that eating whole grains was associated with lower body weight and lower blood pressure.

The new 12-week study included 50 obese adults, ages 20 to 65, who were divided into two groups -- one group ate a diet high in whole grains while the other group ate refined grains. Both groups were encouraged to do moderate exercise and received advice on weight loss and healthy eating, *CBC News* reported.

At the end of the 12 weeks, people in both groups had lost an average of eight to 11 pounds. Those who ate whole grains lost more abdominal fat.

The study also found that people in the whole grain group had a 38 percent decrease in C-reactive protein, an inflammatory marker associated with increased risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, *CBC News* reported.

That kind of decrease puts whole grains on par with cholesterol-lowering statin drugs, the researchers said. The findings were published in the January issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

## **People With Low Folate Levels More Likely to Have Dementia**

People with low blood levels of folic acid were about three times more likely to have dementia than those with higher levels of the B vitamin, says a study that tracked 518 South Korean pensioners for two years, *BBC News* reported.

Researchers found that 3.5% of participants were folate deficient and these people were 3.5 times more likely to have developed dementia by the end of the study.

Dementia was more common in those who were older, relatively poorly educated and inactive, said the study, published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*.

This study is "one further example of why it is so crucial for people to lead a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet rich in B vitamins and antioxidants," Clive Ballard, director of research at the Alzheimer's Society in the U.K. told *BBC News*.

Source: [www.health.msn.com](http://www.health.msn.com)