FOOD AND FITNESS

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FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH-LOVE YOUR HEART!

The Heart of the Matter

Having a healthy heart is paramount to being healthy overall. After years of a decline in heart disease rates, researchers analyzing national data report this decline has fallen off. The obesity epidemic, brought on by suboptimal diet and limited exercise, may be the contributing culprit, according to Dr. Russel Luepker of the Mayo Clinic at the University of Minnesota.

While we can't choose our parents (our genes!) we **can** decide what to eat, how fit and active we choose to be, whether we use tobacco, and how we manage our stress!

In a December 2008 study reported in the Archives of Internal

(Continued on page 2)

Cardiac Rehab Week February 8-14, 2009

Cardiac Rehab may be right for you if you have had a heart attack, heart surgery, or have a heart condition. You can get help with exercise, diet, stress, anger, tobacco use. Ask your cardiologist or primary care doctor to refer you to a cardiac rehab near you if you have had a heart event.

Inside this issue:

Staying Fit for Activities of Daily Living	2
Herb of the Month—Garlic	3
Recipe Corner	4

Special points of interest:

- **oldwayspt.org**
- **aacvpr.org**
- **americanheart.org**

The Heart of the Matter (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Medicine a Mediterranean type diet with added mixed nuts proved to be the most effective in improving certain heart disease risk factors. In more than 1200 people three eating styles were tested.

Either a low fat diet, or a Mediterranean diet with added olive oil, or a Mediterranean diet with added nuts were consumed by study subjects. The traditional Mediterranean type diet is high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains with small amounts of animal protein.

The group consuming the Mediterranean diet with added mixed nuts showed numerous benefits compared to the low fat diet or the Mediterranean diet with added olive oil. Improvements in waist circumference, triglycerides and blood pressure, and decreases in chronic inflammation, oxygen-related cell damage, and insulin resistance were noted after one year. The message is that a low fat diet is not the only path to good health. Ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian to individualize your heart healthy diet.

Mediterranean diet—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, small amounts of animal protein.

"...the low fat diet is not the only path to good health."

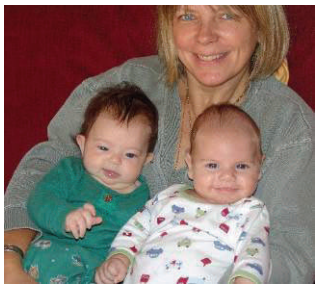
Staying Fit for Activities of Daily Living

Functional strength training means training our bodies to better perform the types of movements we use for activities of daily living. These include:

Lifting—laundry baskets, a gallon of milk, grocery bags, or grandchildren!

Reaching—things on shelves, stooping to pick up objects.

Power—rising from a chair,



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Herb of the Month—Garlic

Garlic's health benefits and medicinal properties have long been acclaimed. In folklore it has been considered a "wonder drug" for preventing everything from the common cold and flu to the plague! Raw garlic has even been touted as an inexpensive treatment for acne and a mosquito repellent!

The allyl sulfides in garlic can have a powerful antioxidant effect. Antioxidants help to protect the body against damaging free radicals produced in the body from normal metabolism.

Fresh garlic is an essential in the kitchen. There are very few dishes that cannot be enhanced by the flavor of garlic.

Remember that a single *bulb* of garlic usually contains between ten and twenty individual *cloves* of garlic. You must first peel the skin before using!

Cooks find that a garlic press is a handy way to keep hands clean when preparing garlic for use in recipes. It's also easier on the fingers than chopping with a knife!

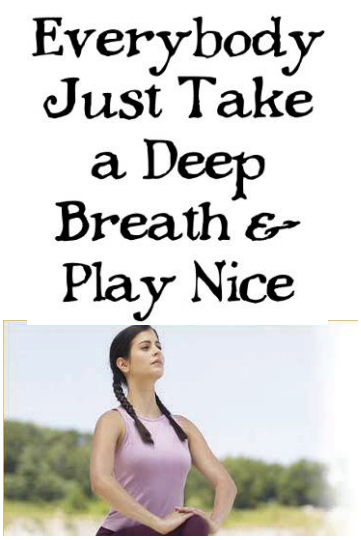
See Recipe Corner page 4 for recipes using fresh garlic.

Emotional Stress and Heart Disease

It's well known that chronic emotional stress may lead some to such unhealthy practices as overeating, smoking, and using alcohol. But even worse for increasing risk of heart disease may be a feeling of lack of control in the workplace, anger, and hostility, which all increase adrenaline levels.

A surge of adrenaline may cause blood to clot more readily, thereby increasing risk of heart disease.

Stress management techniques such as stretching exercises, deep breathing, meditation, and massage have been shown to decrease adrenaline levels and thus decrease risk of heart disease.



Recipe Corner

Pasta with a Punch

8 oz. cooked whole wheat pasta

3 T. extra virgin olive oil

3 cloves garlic

Fresh sliced peppers, green beans, and asparagus

2 Tbs. parsley

1/8 tsp. red pepper

In a large skillet heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic and vegetables and sauté lightly. Add pasta to skillet, mixing well; then add parsley and red pepper. Serves four.

Roasted Garlic Yams

5 small-medium sized fresh yams

1 bulb roasted garlic

¼ cup fat free Half 'n' Half

Salt and black pepper to taste

Wash yams well. Bake at 350 for about one hour. While the yams are baking, wrap one bulb of garlic in aluminum foil and roast it for about an hour. Remove skins from both sweet potatoes and garlic and mash together, using mixer or food processor. Add Half 'N Half, salt and pepper to taste. This dish goes well with pork, turkey or vegetarian fare. Serves 4.

Garlic Vinaigrette

4 tsp. Tarragon vinegar
3 Tbs. olive oil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

1 clove of garlic, crushed

Shake all ingredients together. Will dress salad for 2.

Tear Romaine lettuce, add slivered almonds, craisins, sliced mushrooms and purple onion slices. Toss with Garlic Vinaigrette Dressing.

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Food and Fitness

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"Herb of the Month—Garlic" contributed by Catherine Townsend.
"Staying Fit for Activities of Daily Living" contributed by Betsy Greer.

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Staying Fit for Activities of Daily Living (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

climbing stairs.

Pushing/pulling—opening doors, vacuuming, mowing.

Balancing—avoiding falls.

A strength training program can be done with stretch bands, free weights, weight machines, or simple objects at home such as soup cans or bags of rice. Your individualized program should be created for you considering your age, vision, conditioning, balance, blood pressure, heart health, and any orthopedic problems you may have.

Ask your doctor if strength training is safe for you. An exercise professional can design a program to meet your needs.

A local fitness center or your nearest senior center may have equipment as well as personnel to help you improve your strength, balance, endurance and power.