

HEARTsmart



Take control of your
heart health
today!



Paul Kramer

A guide to the nutrients and lifestyle changes that
can help keep your heart healthy for a lifetime.



About Paul Kramer

Paul Kramer has more than 30 years of experience in Nutritional Product Development, Network Marketing and Corporate Management. Paul is the author of the best-selling book, *Fighting Body Pollution*, available in eight languages worldwide.

As a Nutritional Consultant, Paul is recognized as an expert in the health and wellness industry. He has conducted health and wellness seminars around the world educating individuals to live a healthier lifestyle.

Paul is also a graduate of the Advanced Holistic Nutrition program from the Canadian Nutrition Institute and currently represents Lifestyles as a member of the United States Direct Sales Association.





Table of Contents

About Paul Kramer	02
The Cardiovascular System	04
Importance of Healthy Arteries.....	04
Cardiovascular Disease.....	05
Vitamin K2 and a Healthy Lifestyle	05
Fun Facts.....	06
MK7	07
Vitamin K2	08
Hawthorn Extract.....	11
Cocoa Powder	13
Red Beet Root Extract.....	15
Cayenne Pepper Extract	17
Magnesium Citrate .	19
Folic Acid	21
Vitamin B6	23
Vitamin B12	25
Summary	26



The Cardiovascular System

The cardiovascular system is part of the larger circulatory system, which circulates fluids throughout the body. The cardiovascular system is a one-way system that carries blood to all parts of your body. This process of blood flow within your body is called circulation.

Your heart works as a pump that pushes blood to the organs, tissues and cells of the body.

Blood contains nutrients from the foods you eat and oxygen from the air you breathe. It also contains hormones and cells that fight infection. The blood also transports waste products to various places that then promptly remove the waste from the body.

The parts of the cardiovascular system include the heart and a network of blood vessels:

- **Arteries:** The blood vessels that take blood away from the heart
- **Veins:** Blood vessels that return blood to the heart
- **Capillaries:** Very small vessels that lie between the arteries and veins

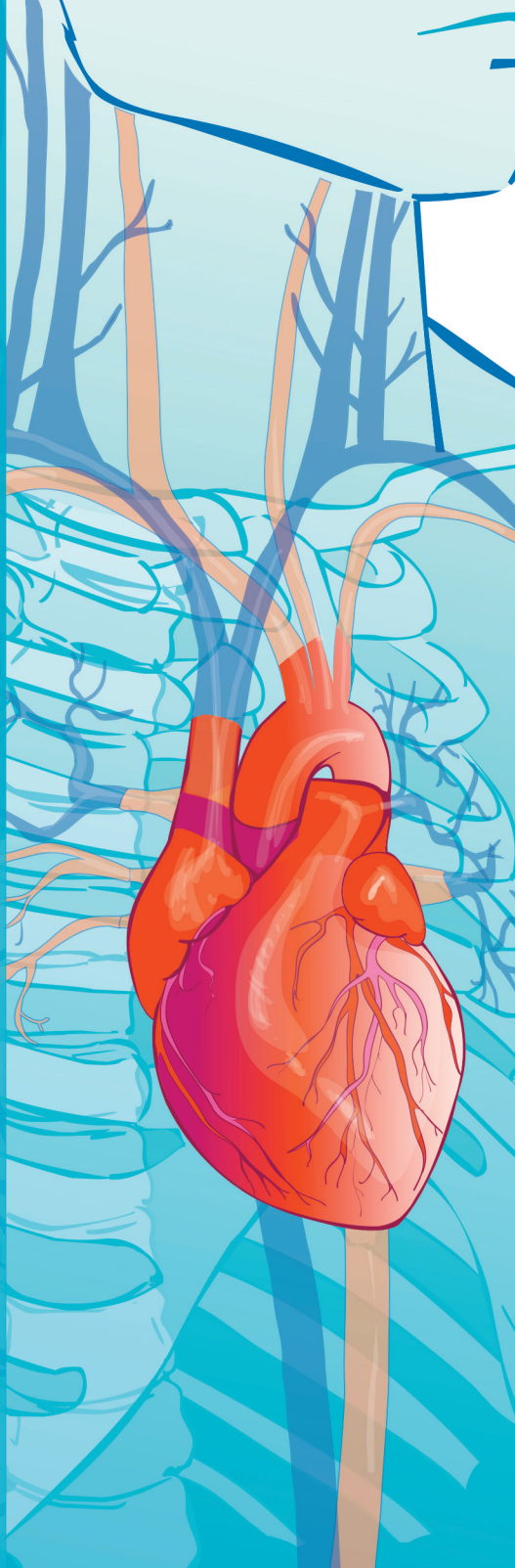


Importance of Healthy Arteries

Twenty major arteries make a path through your tissues, where they branch into smaller vessels called arterioles. Arterioles further branch into capillaries, the true deliverers of oxygen and nutrients to your cell. The arteries are a very important part of the cardiovascular system.

Healthy arteries are “pliable” meaning they are flexible and not “stiff”.

This is important for proper blood flow throughout the body and reducing your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and memory loss. As we will learn, your lifestyle plays a very large role in keeping your arteries healthy.





Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular disease can occur after a person has developed atherosclerosis, also known as “hardening of the arteries,” which results in decreased blood flow because the blood vessels are clogged. It occurs when fat, cholesterol, and calcium build up within the walls of the arteries. These build-ups, called plaques, can block the arteries and reduce the flexibility of the arterial walls.

Atherosclerosis is common in older people, especially in those who have high blood pressure, are diabetic, have high cholesterol, eat too much saturated fat, drink too much alcohol, smoke, don't get enough exercise, and are overweight or obese.

Heart attacks can occur when blood flow to some part of the heart is blocked, causing damage to part of the heart.

Cardiovascular disease can affect the brain as well. Ischemic strokes happen when a blood vessel in the brain is blocked. Hemorrhagic strokes occur when a blood vessel in the brain breaks open. Either type of stroke can result in damage to a part of the brain.

Calcium buildup in the body is a known risk factor for artery disease. Studies such as the CARDIA study (Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults), found that individuals free of coronary artery calcium in young adulthood had stronger, healthier hearts by middle age. Findings also showed that higher increases in calcium build-up over the study period were associated with greater damage to the heart's structure and function.



Vitamin K2 And a Healthy Lifestyle

We now know that Vitamin K2 plays a significant role in reducing the calcium buildup in the arteries, leading to healthy, more pliable arteries for life.

A healthy lifestyle may also help protect the heart's function and structure, as this study shows. As a result, authors stress the importance of staying active, eating healthy and maintaining an ideal weight. Health experts also encourage strict management of any risk factors, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol, which are known to increase risk for heart disease. Together, these steps can help reduce risk for heart disease and maintain a healthy, strong heart and cardiovascular system throughout life.

The Human Cardiovascular System

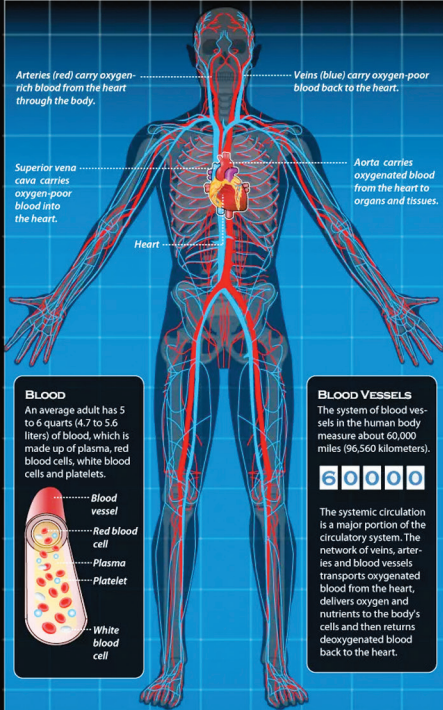
FUN FACTS

- ✓ Your heart is approximately the size of your fist
- ✓ Your heart will beat about 115,000 times each day
- ✓ The heart will beat about 2.5 billion times if you live to 75 years old
- ✓ Your heart pumps about 7500 liters of blood each day
- ✓ Most heart attacks happen on Monday
- ✓ A man's heart is 2 oz heavier than a woman's heart
- ✓ A woman's heart beats slightly faster than a man's heart
- ✓ If you were to stretch out your blood vessel system, it would extend over 60,000 km

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CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

The circulatory system consists of three independent systems that work together: the heart (cardiovascular), lungs (pulmonary), and arteries, veins, coronary and portal vessels (systemic). The system is responsible for the flow of blood, nutrients, oxygen and other gases, and as well as hormones to and from cells.



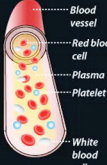
Arteries (red) carry oxygen-rich blood from the heart through the body. Veins (blue) carry oxygen-poor blood back to the heart.

Superior vena cava carries oxygen-poor blood into the heart. Aorta carries oxygenated blood from the heart to organs and tissues.

Heart

BLOOD

An average adult has 5 to 6 quarts (4.7 to 5.6 liters) of blood, which is made up of plasma, red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets.



Blood vessel
Red blood cell
Plasma
Platelet
White blood cell

BLOOD VESSELS

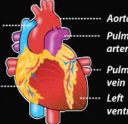
The system of blood vessels in the human body measure about 60,000 miles (96,560 kilometers).

60000

The systemic circulation is a major portion of the circulatory system. The network of veins, arteries and blood vessels transports oxygenated blood from the heart, delivers oxygen and nutrients to the body's cells and then returns deoxygenated blood back to the heart.

THE HEART

The heart is a muscular organ with four chambers. Located just behind and slightly left of the breastbone, it pumps blood through the network of arteries and veins called the cardiovascular system.



Superior vena cava Right ventricle Aorta Pulmonary artery Pulmonary vein Left ventricle

SOURCES: WEBMD.COM, AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION R. TORO / © LiveScience.com

vitaMK7[®]

Natural vitamin k2 as MK7 

VitaMK7 is the only brand of Vitamin K2 that is:

- **NATURAL:** a patented biofermentation process from the Japanese food “natto” (fermented soybeans) that is a 100% chemical-free process
- **PURE:** VitaMK7 contains >99% pure Menaquinone-7 (MK7), the most active form of vitamin K2. This ensures maximum absorption in the body
- **STABLE:** because it is so pure, Vita MK7 is highly stable for over 4 years at room temperature
- **RELIABLE:** Vitamin K2 is the only K2 made in Europe that is both natural and readily available due to a state of the art manufacturing facility in Italy

Proven Health Benefits

Cardiovascular/Artery Health

Studies have proven that **Vitamin K2 as MK7 dramatically reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and early death when taken daily.** The Rotterdam Study (2004) showed a 41% reduction in the incidence of Coronary Heart Disease in those taking supplemental MK7.

Scientists at the University of Maastricht (the Netherlands) showed a dramatic reduction in the stiffness of arteries when taking 180mcg of vitamin K2 per day.

Bone Health

Adequate intake of **Vitamin K2 as MK7 protects the arteries and blood vessels because it drives calcium into the bones.**

The added benefit is that this strengthens the bones and can help prevent osteoporosis (weakening of the bone), a condition that affects millions of women around the world.

Studies have shown supplementing with between 45mcg and 180mcg of vitamin K2 daily can over time increase bone mineral density dramatically by improving the activity of cells that play a role in bone formation.

For All Life Stages

From childhood & adolescence, right up to elderly years, **Vitamin K2 as MK7 is a safe and effective nutrient to add to your diet.** Based on recent studies, a maximum intake of 180mcg per day ensures the optimal heart health and bone health benefits. Maintaining soft and pliable arteries and strong bones play a significant role in not only length of life but also quality of life.

EU GMP Manufacturing Facility in Italy



VitaMK7

- USP and TGA compliance
- EU and ANVISA approved
- Kosher and Halal Certified
- US Patent No. 7,718,407
- EP Patent No. 1803820
- JP Patent No. 5043425

Miso



VITAMIN K2



Natto

Fast Fact:

A higher intake of vitamin K2 is strongly associated with a reduced risk of heart disease. Vitamin K1 appears to be less useful or ineffective.



Sauerkraut

Common Name:

Vitamin K2

Compound:

Menaquinone 7 or MK7

Vitamin K was discovered in 1929 as an essential nutrient for blood clotting. There are two main forms of vitamin K:

- **Vitamin K1 (*phylloquinone*):**
Found in plant foods like leafy greens.
- **Vitamin K2 (*menaquinone*):**
Found in animal foods and fermented foods.

Vitamin K2 can be further divided into several different subtypes, the most important ones being MK-4 and MK-7. Vitamin K2 activates proteins that play a role in blood clotting, calcium metabolism and heart health.

♥ Health Benefits

Heart Health

Calcium build-up in the arteries around your heart is a huge risk factor for heart disease - anything that can reduce this calcium accumulation may help prevent heart disease. **Vitamin K2 is believed to help by preventing calcium from being deposited in your arteries.**

In one study spanning 7–10 years, people with the highest intake of vitamin K2 were 52% less likely to develop artery calcification and had a 57% lower risk of dying from heart disease.

Another study in 16,057 women found that participants with the highest intake of vitamin K2 had a much lower risk of heart disease – for every 10 mcg of K2 they consumed per day, heart disease risk was reduced by 9%.

Bone Health

Osteoporosis or porous bones is a common problem in many countries. It especially affects older women and strongly raises the risk of bone fractures.

As mentioned above, vitamin K2 plays a central role in the metabolism of calcium — the main mineral found in your bones and teeth. **There is substantial evidence from controlled studies that K2 may provide major benefits for bone health.** A 3-year study in 244 postmenopausal women found that those taking vitamin K2 supplements had much slower decreases in age-related bone mineral density.

Long-term studies in Japanese women have observed similar benefits — though very high doses were used in these cases. Out of 13 studies, only one failed to show significant improvement. Seven of these trials, which took fractures into consideration, found that vitamin K2 reduced spinal fractures by 60%, hip fractures by 77% and all non-spinal fractures by 81%.



HAWTHORN EXTRACT



Fast Fact:

Hawthorn berry contains plant polyphenols that have been linked to numerous health benefits due to their antioxidant properties.

Hawthorn, a flowering shrub of the rose family, has an extensive history of use in cardiovascular disease, dating back to the first century. **Hawthorn is used for cardiovascular conditions such as congestive heart failure (CHF), coronary heart disease, angina, and arrhythmias. It is also used to increase heart strength reduced by high blood pressure or pulmonary disease.** Very high in polyphenols, hawthorn acts a strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory with many additional benefits to the body.

♥ Health Benefits

Heart Health

Hawthorn berry is best known for its heart health benefits. A review of 14 randomized studies in more than 850 people concluded that those who took hawthorn extract along with their heart failure medications experienced improved heart function and exercise tolerance. They also experienced less shortness of breath and fatigue.

People with heart failure are often encouraged to take hawthorn in addition to their current medications, as the supplement is considered safe with few side effects.

A 2-year observational study in 952 people with heart failure found that those supplementing with hawthorn berry extract had less fatigue, shortness of breath, and heart palpitations than people who did not supplement with it. The group taking hawthorn also required fewer medications to manage their heart failure. Finally, another large study in over 2,600 people with heart failure suggested that supplementing with hawthorn may reduce the risk of sudden heart-related death.

High Blood Pressure

In traditional Chinese medicine, hawthorn is one of the most commonly recommended foods to help treat high blood pressure. Several animal studies show that hawthorn can act as a vasodilator, meaning **it can relax constricted blood vessels, ultimately lowering blood pressure.**

In a 10-week study in 36 people with mildly elevated blood pressure, those taking hawthorn extract daily showed a trend toward reduced diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number of a reading).

Antioxidant/Anti-inflammatory

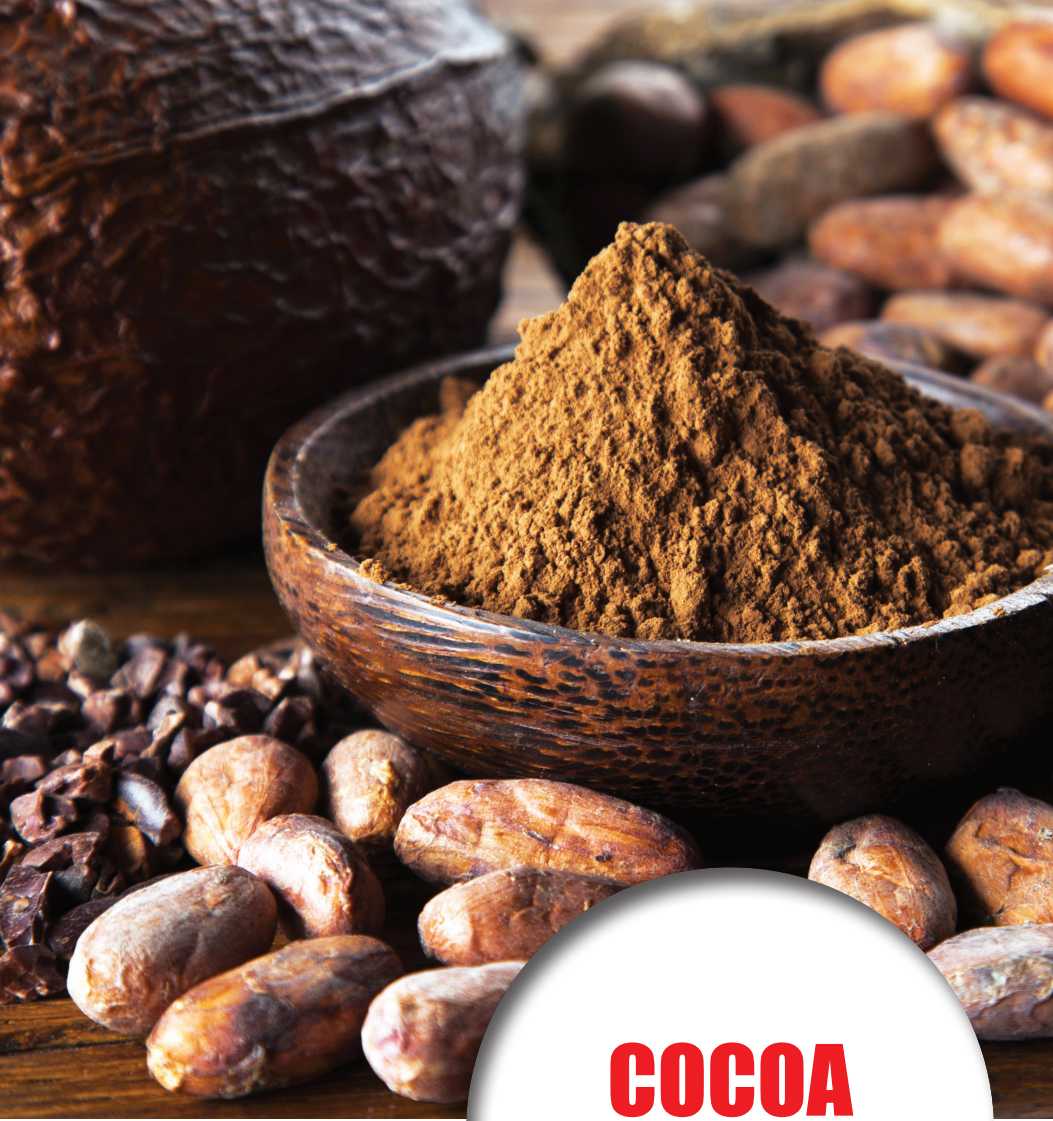
Due to its high levels of polyphenols, hawthorn has both strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory capabilities. This supports many body functions including those closely associated with heart and brain health.



Common Name:
Hawthorn

Botanical Name:
Crataegus laevigata

Part Used:
Leaf and Flower
or berry



**COCOA
POWDER**



Fast Fact:

Cocoa can improve blood flow and reduce cholesterol. Eating up to one serving of chocolate per day may reduce your risk of heart attack, heart failure and stroke.



Common Name:
Cocoa

Botanical Name:
Theobroma cacao

Part Used:
Bean

Cocoa is thought to have first been used by the Maya civilization of Central America. It was introduced to Europe by Spanish conquerors in the 16th century and quickly became popular as a health-promoting medicine. Cocoa beans are the seeds of the cocoa tree, which is found in tropical climates.

The bean powder is a source of phytonutrients called polyphenols, which include epicatechin and catechin. These polyphenols are thought to have beneficial effects on health. They are also found in dark unprocessed chocolate, cocoa beverages, and in processed chocolate products in smaller amounts.

Health Benefits

Heart Health

Cocoa has properties that may reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke. This flavanol-rich ingredient improves the level of nitric oxide in your blood, which relaxes and dilates your arteries and blood vessels and improves blood flow.

Cocoa has been found to reduce “bad” LDL cholesterol, have a blood thinning effect similar to aspirin, improve blood sugars and reduce inflammation. These properties have been linked to a lower risk of heart attack, heart failure and stroke.

A review of nine studies in 157,809 people found that higher chocolate consumption was associated with a significantly lower risk of heart disease, stroke and death.

Results of studies suggest that frequent consumption of small amounts of cocoa-rich chocolate may have protective benefits for your heart.

Enhance Blood Flow

Several studies have found that polyphenols, such as those in cocoa, may reduce your risk of neurodegenerative diseases by improving brain function and blood flow. Additionally, flavanols influence the production of nitric oxide, which relaxes the muscles of your blood vessels, improving blood flow and blood supply to your brain.

Enhanced blood flow benefits the cardiovascular system in many ways and thereby has a role in maintaining or improving heart health. A two-week study in 34 older adults given high-flavanol cocoa found blood flow to the brain increased by 8% after one week and 10% after two weeks. Further studies suggest that daily intake of cocoa flavanols can improve mental performance in people with and without mental impairments.



**RED BEET
ROOT
EXTRACT**



Fast Fact:

Clinical research has shown that beet root extract improves the use of oxygen in the body of well-trained athletes.



Common Name:

Beet Root Extract

Botanical Name:

Beta vulgaris

Part Used:

Roots and leaves

The beet is a flowering perennial plant that is often consumed as a vegetable but it has a medicinal use as well. Beets are often consumed either whole, as beet greens or as beet juice.

♥ Health Benefits

The medicinal uses of beets include the **treatment of liver disease related to fatty liver, hypertension (high blood pressure) and the boosting of athletic performance.** Beets are also known to have anti-inflammatory effects that can help reduce muscle soreness after exercise.

Blood Flow

Beets are an excellent natural source of a compound called nitrates. **The nitrates found in beets can increase levels of a chemical called nitric oxide in the body. Nitric oxide can affect blood vessels in a positive way, possibly reducing blood pressure and making it easier to exercise.** The enhancement of nitric oxide in the body enhances blood flow throughout the body by helping to dilate the blood vessels and studies have shown this can benefit those exercising or even serious athletes.

The general population can also benefit from the blood flow enhancing benefits of increasing your daily intake of naturally occurring nitrates – like those found in abundance in beet products.

Blood Pressure

Beet root products are of interest in improving blood pressure. Studies have shown the potential for improvements in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in adults. Average time to see benefits from beet root products on blood pressure is estimated to be two weeks of daily usage.

Blood triglycerides

A combination of beet extract and hawthorn extract has been shown to improve blood triglyceride levels. This is beneficial to the overall lipid (fat) profiles in the body related to cardiovascular health.



**CAYENNE
PEPPER
EXTRACT**



Fast Fact:

The most significant research shows capsicum has its greatest effects on both the circulatory and digestive systems of the body.

Capsicum is a genus in the Solanaceae family, which includes various sweet peppers and chili peppers. In foods, capsicum is used as a source of spice. **In medicine, capsicum is used as a source of its active compound, a phytonutrient called capsaicin.**

♥ Health Benefits

Orally, capsicum is used for digestive issues, poor circulation, excessive blood clotting, hyperlipidemia, and preventing heart disease. **Capsicum is also used for diabetes, athletic performance, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), joint pain and peptic ulcers.** In Canada, allowable capsicum claims include helps support peripheral circulation and to aid in digestion.

Circulatory System

Cayenne pepper may help the circulatory system by increasing blood flow. It may also strengthen the heart, arteries, capillaries, and nerves. **Capsaicin promotes blood flow to tissues by lowering blood pressure and stimulating the release of nitric oxide and other vasodilators – or compounds that help expand your blood vessels.** Vasodilators allow blood to flow more easily through your veins and arteries by relaxing the tiny muscles found in blood vessel walls.

Research indicates that ingesting cayenne pepper increases circulation, improves blood vessel strength and reduces plaque buildup in your arteries. In the respiratory system, cayenne may help break up congestion due to bronchitis.

Digestive System

Dietary spices and their active components may provide many benefits for your stomach. **Cayenne pepper may help boost the stomach's defense against infections, increase digestive fluid production and help deliver enzymes to the stomach, aiding digestion.**

It does this by stimulating nerves in the stomach that signal for protection against injury.

While some believe that spicy food may cause stomach ulcers, a review paper has shown that the capsaicin in cayenne peppers may actually help reduce the risk of stomach ulcers.



Common Name:

Cayenne pepper

Botanical Name:

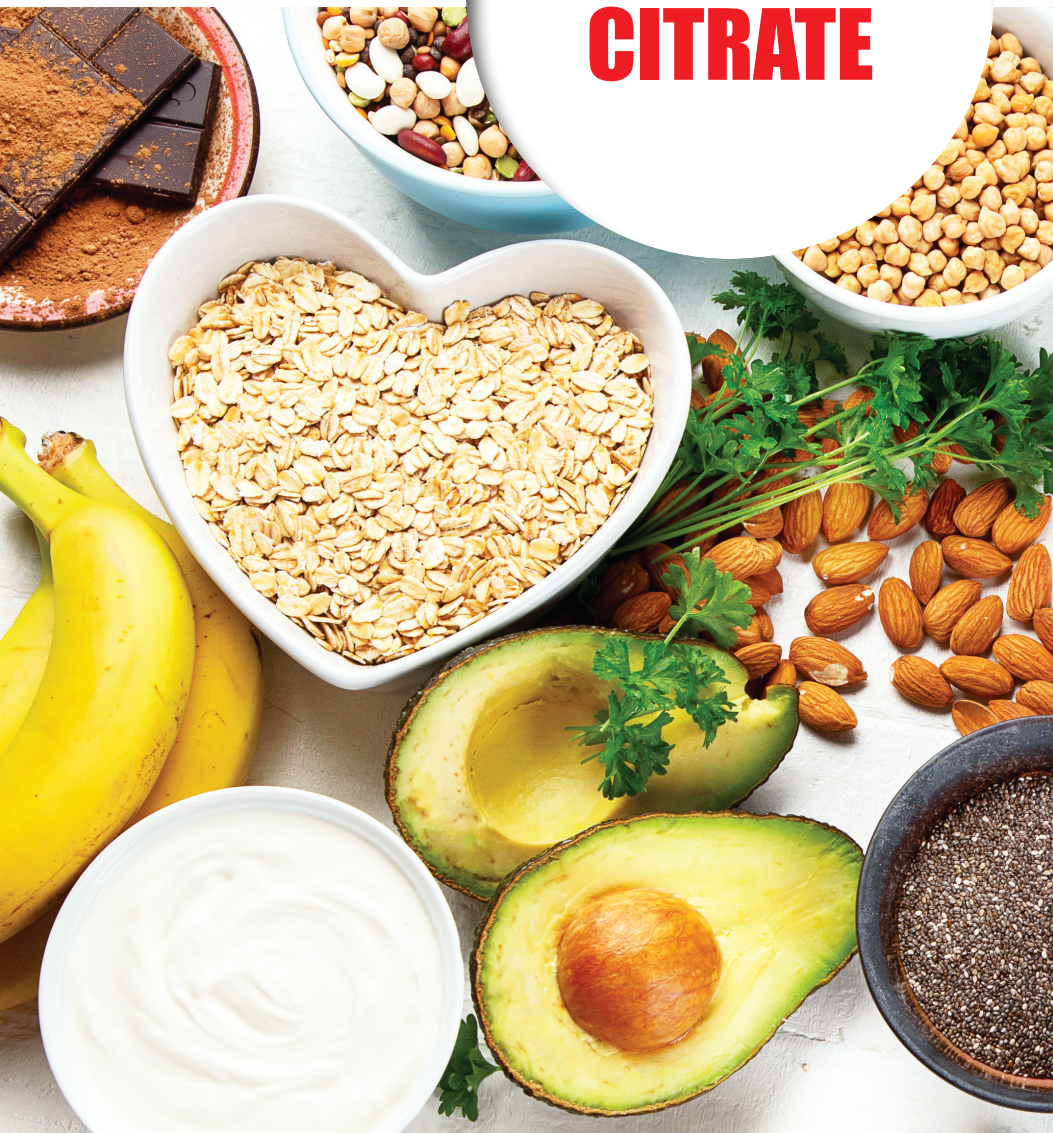
Capsicum annuum

Part Used:

Fruit



MAGNESIUM CITRATE



Fast Fact:

Foods that are high in fibre are very often also high in magnesium.



Common Name:
Magnesium

Compound:
Magnesium Citrate

Magnesium is a major mineral that plays a role in over 300 cellular reactions in the body. It is the fourth most common mineral in the body. **Dietary sources of magnesium include legumes, whole grains, vegetables (especially broccoli, squash, and green leafy vegetables), seeds, and nuts (especially almonds). Other sources include dairy products, meats, chocolate, and coffee.** Unfortunately, dietary intake of magnesium is often low, especially among women and the elderly.

Health Benefits

Heart Function

Magnesium is important for maintaining a healthy heart.

It naturally competes with calcium, which is essential for generating heart contractions. When calcium enters your heart muscle cells, it stimulates the muscle fibers to contract. Magnesium counters this effect, helping these cells relax. This movement of calcium and magnesium across your heart cells maintains a healthy heartbeat.

When your magnesium levels are low, calcium may over stimulate your heart muscle cells. One common symptom of this is a rapid and/or irregular heartbeat, which may be life-threatening. Also, an enzyme in the body that generates electrical impulses, requires magnesium for proper function. Certain electrical impulses can affect your heartbeat.

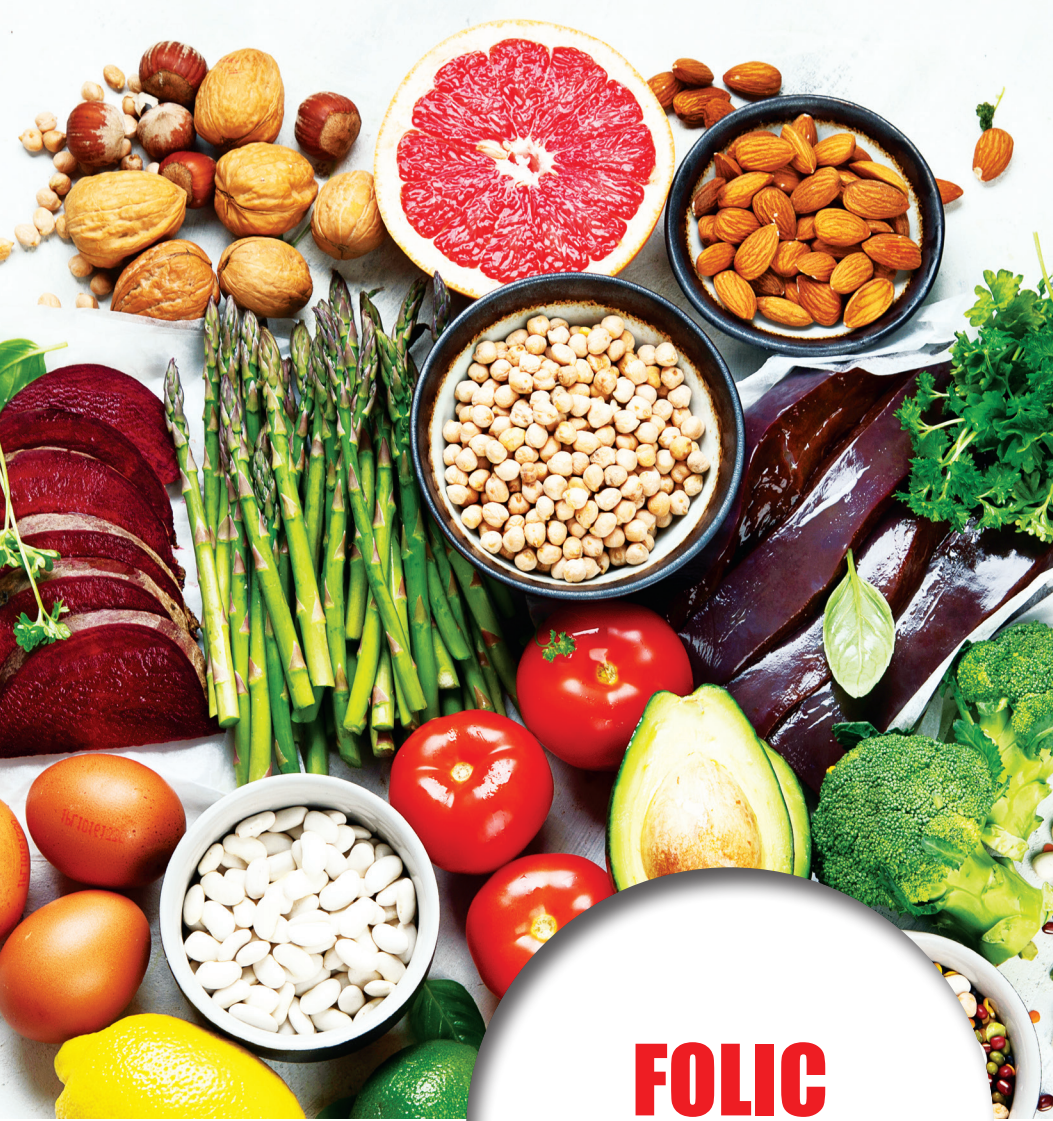
Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is a health concern that affects millions around the world. **Studies have shown that taking magnesium may lower your blood pressure.** In one study, people who took 450 mg of magnesium daily experienced a fall in the systolic (upper) and diastolic (lower) blood pressure values by 20.4 and 8.7, respectively. An analysis of multiple studies found that a median dose of 368 mg of magnesium significantly reduced both systolic and diastolic blood pressure values in both healthy adults and those with high blood pressure. However, the impact was significantly higher in people with existing high blood pressure.

Reduce the Risk of Heart Disease

Several studies have linked low magnesium levels to a higher risk of heart disease. For instance, one study found that those with the lowest magnesium levels had the highest risk of death, especially due to heart disease. By increasing your intake of magnesium daily, you may lower this risk. That's because **magnesium has strong anti-inflammatory properties, may prevent blood clotting and can help your blood vessels relax to lower your blood pressure.**

An analysis of 40 studies with more than one million participants found that consuming 100 mg more of magnesium each day reduced the risk of stroke and heart failure by 7% and 22%, respectively. These are two major risk factors for heart disease.



**FOLIC
ACID**



Fast Fact:

Research has shown that low blood folate levels are associated with poor brain function and an increased risk of dementia and mental impairment in adults.

Folate and folic acid are forms of the water-soluble B9 vitamin. Folate occurs naturally in food. Folic acid is the common form of this vitamin found in supplements and is more bioavailable. **In many countries foods such as cold cereals and baking flour, which extends to breads, pastas, bakery items, cookies and crackers are fortified with folic acid. Foods that are naturally high in folate content include asparagus, mushrooms, yeast, legumes, leafy vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, and lettuce; fruits such as bananas, melons, tomatoes, oranges and lemons; and animal protein such as beef liver and kidney.**

♥ Health Benefits

Lower Heart Disease Risk Factors

Supplementing with folate-based supplements, including folic acid, may help improve heart health and reduce your risk of heart disease risk factors. Elevated levels of the amino acid homocysteine is associated with an increased risk of developing heart disease. Your blood levels of homocysteine are determined by both nutritional and genetic factors. Folate plays a major role in the metabolism of homocysteine, and low folate levels can contribute to high homocysteine levels - potentially increasing your risk of heart disease. **Research has shown that supplementing with folic acid may reduce homocysteine levels and heart disease risk.**

A review that included 30 studies and over 80,000 people demonstrated that supplementing with folic acid led to a 4% reduction in overall heart disease risk and a 10% reduction in stroke risk. In addition, folic acid supplements may help reduce high blood pressure, a known heart disease risk factor. Folic acid supplements have been shown to improve blood flow, which may help improve cardiovascular function.

Reproductive Health

It is recommended that women capable of becoming pregnant take folic acid 400 mcg daily from fortified foods or supplements to prevent neural tube birth defects in infants. **After becoming pregnant, women are advised to take folic acid 600 mcg daily during pregnancy.** This recommendation is based on research showing that a higher intake of folic acid from food and supplements during pregnancy reduces the primary incidence of neural tube birth defects by 41% to 69%.

Diabetes

Folate-based supplements may help improve blood sugar control, reduce insulin resistance, and enhance cardiovascular function in those with diabetes. These supplements may also help reduce diabetic complications, including neuropathy.



Common Name:

Folic Acid

Compound:

Vitamin B9



VITAMIN B6



Fast Fact:

The ability of Vitamin B6 to lower homocysteine levels is the main reason it is so beneficial for heart health, mood regulation and brain health.



Common Name:
Vitamin B6

Compound:
Pyridoxine

Vitamin B6 is a member of the vitamin B family - all of which are water soluble. **Vitamin B6 is present in many foods including cereal grains, legumes, vegetables, liver, meat, and eggs. In the body, vitamin B6 is required for protein metabolism.** It is also involved in carbohydrate and fat metabolism. Several forms of vitamin B6 exist, including pyridoxine, pyridoxal, and pyridoxamine. All of these forms are considered to be equally effective in the human body.

Health Benefits

Heart Function

Vitamin B6 may prevent clogged arteries and minimize heart disease risk. Research shows that people with low blood levels of vitamin B6 have almost double the risk of getting heart disease compared to those with higher B6 levels. This is likely due to the role of B6 in decreasing elevated homocysteine levels associated with several disease processes, including heart disease.

Research has also shown that taking vitamin B6 with folic acid is effective in lowering homocysteine levels.

A randomized controlled trial in 158 healthy adults who had siblings with heart disease divided participants into two groups, one that received 250 mg of vitamin B6 and 5 mg of folic acid every day for two years and another that received a placebo. The group that took B6 and folic acid had lower homocysteine levels and less abnormal heart tests during exercise than the placebo group, putting them at an overall lower risk of heart disease.

Improves Mood and Lowers Depression

Vitamin B6 plays an important role in mood regulation. This is partly because this vitamin is necessary for creating neurotransmitters that regulate emotions, including serotonin, dopamine and gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA).

Vitamin B6 also plays a role in decreasing high blood levels of the amino acid homocysteine, which have been linked to depression and other psychiatric issues. Several studies have shown that depressive symptoms are associated with low blood levels and intakes of vitamin B6, especially in older adults who are at high risk for B vitamin deficiency. One study in 250 older adults found that deficient blood levels of vitamin B6 doubled the likelihood of depression.



VITAMIN B12

Fast Fact:

Vitamin B12 is involved in energy production in your body. Making sure you're getting enough B12 will ensure your energy levels are optimal.



Common Name:

Vitamin B12

Compound:

Cyanocobalamin

Vitamin B12 is an essential water-soluble vitamin that is commonly found in a variety of foods, such as fish, shellfish, meat, eggs, and dairy products. In supplements, it is frequently used in combination with other B vitamins.

♥ Health Benefits

Heart Health

High blood levels of the common amino acid homocysteine have been linked to an increased risk of heart disease. Maintaining a healthy, low level of homocysteine is important to maintaining good cardiovascular health. If you're significantly deficient in vitamin B12, your homocysteine levels become elevated.

Studies have shown that vitamin B12 helps decrease homocysteine levels, which may reduce your risk of heart disease. Taking vitamin B12 supplements in combination with folic acid, and sometimes with vitamin B6, can reduce serum concentrations of homocysteine.

Eye Health

A large-scale clinical study shows that taking vitamin B12 in combination with folic acid and vitamin B6 daily, reduces the risk of developing Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) in women.

Women 40 years and older with a history of cardiovascular disease or at least three risk factors for cardiovascular disease who take this combination for an average of 7.3 years have a significantly reduced risk of developing AMD. The effects of vitamin B12 alone on AMD are unclear.

Boost Energy

Vitamin B12 supplements have long been touted as the go-to product for a boost of energy. All B vitamins play an important role in your body's energy production, though they don't necessarily provide energy themselves.

Currently, there is no scientific evidence to suggest that vitamin B12 supplements can boost energy in those with sufficient levels of this vitamin. However, **if you're deficient in vitamin B12, taking a supplement or increasing your intake will likely improve your energy level.** In fact, one of the most common early signs of vitamin B12 deficiency is fatigue or lack of energy.

HEARTsmart



Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among both men and women globally, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Some of the major factors contributing to heart disease include: stress, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol levels, smoking, lack of regular exercise and congenital heart defects.

Fortunately, about 80% of cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, are preventable. So by sticking to a healthy lifestyle or making a few positive lifestyle changes, you can keep heart ailments at bay for good. But what are the most important Lifestyle habits we should form? Let's take a look at some basic tips to try and follow:



DIET/NUTRITION

- ✓ Consume a healthy and balanced diet by eating a combination of different foods, focusing on brightly coloured fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts, fatty fish and whole grains. Make sure you get enough antioxidant nutrients from your diet and your supplements.
- ✓ Consume less sugar and salt - try a salt substitute.
- ✓ Reduce intake of harmful fats by focusing on unsaturated fats that are found in fish, avocado and nuts, and in sunflower, soybean, canola and olive oils.
- ✓ Try and substitute animal proteins for vegetable protein a few times a week. This includes chickpeas, tofu, lentils and soybean products.
- ✓ Reduce your intake of alcohol or avoid it completely.
- ✓ Dark chocolate (cocoa) and green tea are high in heart healthy antioxidants.
- ✓ Hawthorn berry extract along with Vitamin K2 (as MK7), folic acid, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12 has shown to be beneficial to cardiovascular health by keep the arteries soft and pliable - thereby avoiding "hardening of the arteries".



EXERCISE/ACTIVITY

- ✓ Staying active and moving your body is vital to overall good health!
- ✓ Exercise, especially aerobic exercise like running, cycling, swimming, dancing, walking up stairs or very brisk walking is especially beneficial to the cardiovascular system.
- ✓ Regular aerobic activity lowers blood pressure, reduces stress, improves blood fat profiles and enhances blood flow throughout the body.
- ✓ Do not smoke and if you currently do – quit! Smoking causes inflammation and damage to the arteries that can dramatically affect your health and lifespan.



MANAGE YOUR STRESS

- ✓ While a certain amount of stress is actually good for you, the key is to keep stress and anxiety from spiraling. Excessive stress can lead to an increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, inflammation and abnormal heart rhythms—all of which are bad for your heart health.
- ✓ While stress affects everyone in different ways, there are two major types of stress: stress that's beneficial and motivating, good stress; and stress that causes anxiety and even health problems, bad stress.
- ✓ Good stress can include things like exercise, getting a promotion at work, riding a roller coaster, going on a first date. Bad stress can include circumstances like financial worries, an unhappy home life or a constantly stressful job. These are acute stresses, meaning they occur repeatedly.
- ✓ Getting enough good sleep can help your body deal with bad stress. Your body repairs itself and your brain “detoxifies” during proper rest. Do all you can to ensure you get eight or more hours of restful sleep each night.

References: [Healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com); [Natural Medicines Database](#); [NHPD Monographs](#)

The material is intended for information purposes only and should not be used in place of consultation with a healthcare professional.

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