

ESSENTIALS *for* HEALTH

Diabetes and Your Heart— The Connection



If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, managing common symptoms like fatigue and increased hunger may be your most immediate concern.

What you may not be aware of, however, is that heart disease and stroke are also linked to diabetes. Health experts want patients to make that connection, because adults with type 2 diabetes are two to four times more likely to have heart disease or a stroke compared with adults who do not have diabetes, according to the American Heart Association.

Physicians urge patients with diabetes and prediabetes to stay up-to-date on their screenings for both their diabetes treatment and heart disease. Because type 2 diabetes is a “silent killer” that can take 10 years to fully develop, screening is essential since so many patients are unaware they have the disease. A fasting blood sugar over 125 (fasting plasma blood glucose level over 125 mg/dL) would give you a diagnosis, but it should be followed up with a second test. The current recommendation is to start having a blood test for blood glucose at age 45.

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Cancer-Fighting Foods Made Easy

You've probably heard from the health experts that eating fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains may reduce your risk of developing cancer. And maybe you've been eating your weight in garlic, tomatoes or whatever foods crop up in the news as especially potent cancer fighters.

But if you think one food will give you immunity from cancer, think again. Unfortunately, there isn't a single magic food that will protect you against cancer.

Instead, say nutrition experts, you're better off including a wide range of foods in your diet rather than focusing on a “magic bullet” food. To protect yourself against cancer, redesign your meals so that a greater proportion comes from plant sources and less from meat, they say.

Eating healthy

What should you be eating if you're concerned about cancer prevention?

Some studies being done on the protective effects of fruits and vegetables direct their subjects to eat nine servings of vegetables and three of fruit every day.

But the general recommendation is easier to follow: Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Some guidelines go up to 11, depending on your situation.

But don't despair if your idea of a vegetable is a ketchup-covered fry. You can change your diet by taking small steps in shopping and cooking:

- Pick up a new fruit or vegetable when you're in the grocery store.
- Instead of a coffee break, try green tea and a handful of grapes. Try hummus as an afternoon snack to get beans into your diet.
- For meals, shrink the protein. Choose fish, lean meat and skinless chicken and keep the portion to a third of your plate. Fill the rest of the space with whole grains, vegetables and beans.



GRILLED RATATOUILLE SALAD

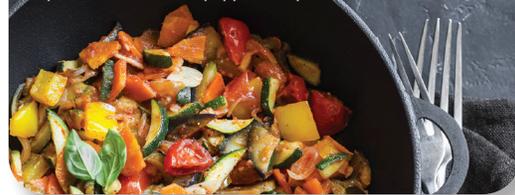
Ingredients (serves 4)

- ▶ 2 Japanese eggplants
- ▶ 1 medium sweet onion, such as Vidalia
- ▶ 1 medium summer squash
- ▶ 1 medium red bell pepper
- ▶ Olive oil
- ▶ 2 medium ripe tomatoes, chopped
- ▶ 2 tablespoons chopped, pitted black olives
- ▶ 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- ▶ 1 tablespoon chopped Italian parsley
- ▶ 1/2 teaspoon crushed dried oregano
- ▶ 1/4 teaspoon crushed dried thyme
- ▶ 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste
- ▶ Parmesan cheese to taste
- ▶ 2 cups cooked brown rice, optional

Nutritional information:
Per serving (with rice and seasoned with 1/4 teaspoon salt):
260 calories/
10 grams total fat/
6.7 grams protein/
33 grams carbohydrates/
4 milligrams cholesterol/
450 milligrams sodium/
4.5 grams dietary fiber

Preparation

Slice the eggplants 1/2 inch thick. Slice the onion 1/2 inch thick. Quarter the squash lengthwise. Cut the bell pepper into 1/2 inch pieces lengthwise. Brush the eggplant, onion, bell pepper and squash lightly with oil. Place in a vegetable basket and cook on a hot grill. Remove the onion, bell pepper and squash after 10 minutes or when browned and tender; remove the eggplant after 12 minutes or when browned and tender. Coarsely chop the grilled vegetables. Place in a bowl. Add the tomatoes, olives, basil, Italian parsley, oregano, thyme, 1 tablespoon olive oil, vinegar, spoon over rice, salt, pepper and parmesan cheese to taste.



BEAUTY BOOSTERS: Eating for a Better-Looking You

In the name of beauty, you can slather vitamin C creams on your face or use a milk-based conditioner for your hair. But to look your best, you need to pay as much attention to what you put in your body as what you put on it.

Fortunately, an edible beauty regimen is easy to swallow. The same foods you eat to ensure good health are the ones you need to look your best.

Start with inner skin care

If your skin feels pulled or is showing more wrinkles, it could be a sign that you need more fluids. On the other hand, the problem could be that you've cut too many fats, especially omega-3 fatty acids, from your diet. The loss of omega-3 fatty acids can lead to dryness. To put the moisture back into dry skin, try including fish, flaxseed, walnuts, canola oil and soy oil in your meals. Vitamins may also improve your skin's quality. Vitamin C helps skin's plumpness. If you have a deficiency, your skin becomes rough and dry and develops capillary breaks. Good vitamin C sources include citrus fruits, strawberries, papaya, tomatoes, kiwifruit and cabbage.

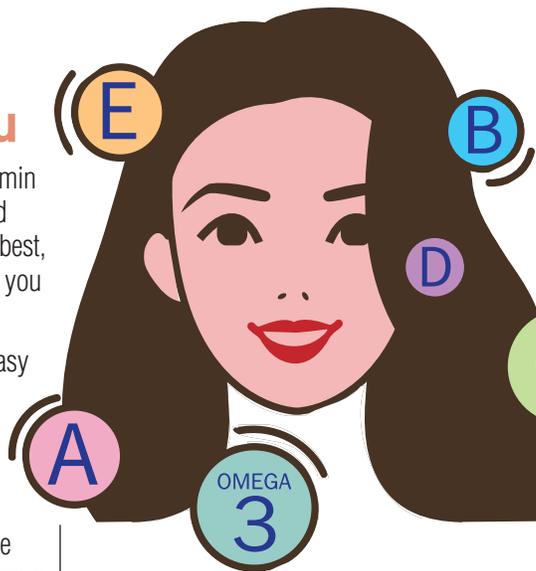
Diabetes and Your Heart continued from front

People with a family history of type 2 diabetes or who are Asian American, African American or Native American and women who had gestational diabetes or gave birth to a large child should be checked at younger ages.

When type 2 diabetes is diagnosed, doctors often treat patients as if they've already had a heart attack even if they haven't. That means aggressively addressing high blood glucose levels, blood pressure and cholesterol.

In fact, patients who have both hypertension and diabetes are at double the risk for cardiovascular disease, according to the AHA. In addition, having low HDL ("good") cholesterol, high LDL ("bad") cholesterol and high triglycerides is an unhealthy combination often found in people with diabetes and is linked to coronary heart disease.

Patients with diabetes should monitor their blood sugar levels, get more exercise (even if it doesn't mean a gym routine), quit smoking if that's a habit, and work with their physicians to get their cholesterol and blood sugar levels down.



The B vitamins, which are plentiful in whole-grain foods, also support skin health. And add vitamin A, found in dark yellow or orange vegetables, such as carrots, hard-shell squash and sweet potatoes.

Brush up on hair nutrients

A healthy diet grows healthy hair. If you've been on a low-calorie or limited diet, it will slow hair growth or cause it to fall out.

Zinc and copper, which you can get from fish and shellfish, are important for hair health, as is selenium from broccoli, cauliflower, meat and seafood.

EATING FOR BEAUTY

LIMIT:

Sodium
Alcohol
Caffeine

INCLUDE:

Vegetables
Fruits
Calcium
Fats

Calcium for a better look

A pretty smile can be one of your best beauty assets. To flash those pearly whites, make sure you're getting enough calcium from fat-free milk or other sources.

Calcium is important to avoid tooth loss, and vitamin C is essential for gum health.

Getting enough calcium also helps you maintain your stature and stand up straight (just like Mom always told you to), which can make you look longer and leaner no matter what your weight.

Making Sense of Your Bone Density Scores

You're probably aware of the risks of osteoporosis, the debilitating disease that makes bones fracture as they age. But as painful as a broken bone can be, the good news is that tests that help identify the risk of fractures, like the Bone Mineral Density (BMD) test, are painless and readily available.

While the BMD test can't prevent osteoporosis, your doctor can use the information from it to track changes in your bone mass over time and help determine appropriate treatments if needed.

How it works

Most bone density testing is performed either at a hospital or in a doctor's office. Using X-ray or ultrasound machines, a technician measures the amount of mineral in a bone, typically in the hip and the lumbar spine. Some BMD machines read bone mass of the heel or elbow, but that may give a false sense of security because bone density varies throughout the body.

The BMD may provide two numbers: a T-score, which measures how your bone mass compares with that of a healthy 30-year-old woman, and a Z-score, which compares you to other women who are the same age. Your physician can help you interpret your scores and suggest treatment.

In general, doctors suggest that women have their bone density measured at the onset of menopause, or by age 65 to 70, and then at least every two years. Women at high risk of osteoporosis should begin testing at age 50. High-risk factors include low body weight, family history and previous bone fractures.

By the numbers

The result of your BMD test usually will be a number between 1 and -3, which shows how your bone density compares with that of a healthy 30-year-old woman (your T-score).

Understanding your BMD test results:

- ▶ 0 – average bone density
- ▶ 1 and above – higher than normal bone density
- ▶ -1.1 to -2.5 – low bone mass, which can be a cause for concern. Some physicians recommend treatment for patients with a score of -2.0 or below.