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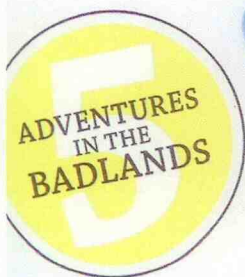
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TORONTO'S
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THE
FITNESS
ISSUE

Building Optimal Health and Performance

TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEART

 BY MELINA ROBERTS

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

HERBALS



CRATAGEUS OXYCANTHUS (HAWTHORN)

What it is: Hawthorn is a plant known for its antioxidant properties that

help keep the heart healthy.

What it does: Hawthorn has been shown to improve coronary circulation, which reduces and relieves symptoms of angina. It increases the capacity of the cardiac muscle cells to contract and improves energy, activity and nutrient utilization of the heart.

Why you might need it: Hawthorn is often used with other cardiac herbs to help reverse degenerative changes in the heart, especially those caused by aging. It can be used to improve blood flow to the heart, early stages of congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, angina and arrhythmias.

Who shouldn't use this: Those with a slow heart rate or low blood pressure should be monitored if taking this herb. Use under direction of a health-care provider if pregnant, breastfeeding or if taking certain heart medications such as digoxin. Should not be taken with mineral supplements, thiamine and alkaloids.

What happens if you take too much: Safe for long-term use. Gastric disorders, agitation, headaches and dizziness are rare.

Where to get it: Hawthorn berries, flowers and leaves are used in supplements, teas and tinctures.

IMPACT Expert Picks: Mediherb Hawthorn Berries 1:2; AOR Hawthorn II; Vita Aid H.C.Q10-Cardio; Botanica Cardiovascular Strength.



MOTHERWORT (LEONARUS CARDIACA)

What it is: Leonarus is a herb that tonifies the heart muscle's ability to efficiently contract and pump blood.

What it does: While improving the heart's

contractility strength, it almost paradoxically is able to lower the body's blood pressure.

One of the ways it does this is by acting as a diuretic — similar to the way some commonly prescribed blood-pressure-lowering medications work. It also works well as an antispasmodic for uterine cramps in women.

Why you might need it: For those who may be in the beginning stages of congestive heart failure, experiencing edema and starting to have difficulty doing exercise due to a lack of blood being distributed through the body. Also those with high blood pressure or have known stressors on the cardiovascular system.

Who shouldn't use this: Those taking blood pressure medications or heart medications should consult a health professional before combining motherwort with other medications.

What happens if you take too much: Gastrointestinal upset and diarrhea may occur with doses greater than 3 grams.

Where to get it: This plant grows throughout North America. The root is often used to make medicine.

IMPACT Expert Picks: St. Francis Herbs.



ALLIUM SATIVUM AND ALLIUM CEPA (GREEN ONION AND GARLIC)

What it is: Allium species are known for being

supportive of the cardiovascular system as well as being effective antimicrobials.

What it does: Alliin, one of the organosulfur compounds found in garlic and onions, has been shown to reduce total cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood while raising the good HDL cholesterol. Allium contains antioxidants, which prevent the oxidation of fats in the blood vessels and inhibits platelet-aggregating factor, which protects against atherosclerosis.

Why you might need it: To prevent or treat

atherosclerosis, thrombosis (clotting of the blood), high blood pressure. Helps prevent heart attacks and strokes and can be used as part of an integrative approach for those on blood thinners or cholesterol-lowering drugs.

Who shouldn't use this: People who are allergic to garlic and onions. It may increase the effect of blood thinners, so use cautiously around surgery.

What happens if you take too much: Large doses, especially of the raw, fresh plant, can irritate the digestive system and affect iodine uptake by the thyroid.

Where to get it: The bulb is used as a supplement, a tincture or as a raw food. May be best tolerated as a supplement.

IMPACT Expert Picks: Allimax; Integrative Therapeutics Garlitrin 4000; Kyolic; or chew a slice of garlic.



HAMAMELIS

What it is: Hamamelis is a scrub or small hardwood tree.

What it does: Blocks

Interleukin-8 activity, reduces and prevents inflammation, prevents degeneration of cells.

Why you might need it: To improve circulation, strengthen veins.

Who shouldn't use this: Women who are pregnant or lactating.

What happens if you take too much: Gastrointestinal complaints, stomach irritation, nausea, vomiting, kidney damage, liver damage.

IMPACT Expert Picks: Genestra Phytogen European Hazel Bud; Thayer's Alcohol Free Witch Hazel



OLEA EUROPAEA (OLIVE LEAF AND FRUIT)

What it is: Olea europaea comes from an evergreen tree that consists of fatty

oil pressed from the fruit of olive trees.

What it does: Helps regulate blood flow by improving its viscosity. Lowers blood pressure, reduces risk of first myocardial infarction, is a powerful free radical scavenger with anti-inflammatory properties. Olive oil contains unsaturated fatty acids and oleic acid, an omega-9 monounsaturated fatty acid that may inhibit omega-6 fatty acid metabolites and suppress production of inflammatory cytokines. Phenolic compounds possess antioxidant, vasodilating and anti-platelet properties.

Why you might need it: If you have high blood pressure, atherosclerosis or need to reduce LDL-cholesterol levels.

Who shouldn't use this: If you are taking antihypertensive drugs, if you are taking diabetes medication, if you have gallstones, as it may trigger gallbladder colic. Avoid if pregnant or nursing.

What happens if you take too much: Nausea, sore throat, stomach upset.

IMPACT Expert Picks: Gemmo Olea europaea by UNDA; Barlean's Olive Leaf Complex.



GINKGO BILOBA (GINKGO)

What it is: The ginkgo biloba tree is the oldest living species in the world. The tree can live as long

as 1,000 years. In Canada, there are laws against growing female ginkgo trees due to the smell of the fruit they produce. In China, this fruit is considered a delicacy.

What it does: Ginkgo biloba is an antioxidant, regulates blood pressure and improves circulation. Ginkgo flavonoid constituents, mainly rutin, are free-radical scavengers that stop damage to DNA and cells, and improves capillary fragility and permeability. Contains ginkgolide constituents that competitively inhibit platelet-activating factor, decreases blood viscosity, improves microcirculatory blood flow, increases cerebral blood flow and protects neural tissue from oxidative damage.

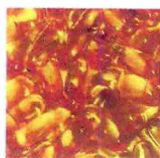
Why you might need it: If you have high blood pressure, or memory, focus or concentration problems.

Who shouldn't use this: Ginkgo may increase the risk of bleeding if taken with anticoagulant, antiplatelet or blood-thinning drugs. Stop taking at least 36 hours before surgery or dental procedures due to risk of bleeding. Pregnant or nursing women should not use ginkgo.

What happens if you take too much: Mild gastrointestinal complaints, headaches, dizziness, palpitations, allergic skin reactions, restlessness, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, lack of muscle tone, weakness. Do not eat the ginkgo biloba fruit or seed.

IMPACT Expert Picks: Genestra PhytoGen Ginkgo Bud; Genestra Ginkgo Tincture; MediHerb Ginkgo Forte; St. Francis Ginkgo.

OTHER SUPPLEMENTS



OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS — FISH OILS

What it is: Omega-3 fatty acids refer to a group of fats that have beneficial

health properties: ALA (found in plants), and EPA and DHA (found in fish).

What it does: Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, thinning blood (similar to the way aspirin does) to reduce incidence of stroke. Omega 3 improves symptoms associated with autistic spectrum disorders, assists in managing autoimmune disorders and acts as a general anti-inflammatory. There is evidence to suggest omega-3 fatty acids improve depression symptoms.

Why you might need it: Reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke or peripheral arterial disease. Reduce pain from inflammation.

Who shouldn't use this: Those on blood thinners. Those allergic to fish should use an alternative omega-3 fatty acid source.

What happens if you take too much: Gastrointestinal upset and diarrhea.

Where to get it: Cold-water oily fish: salmon, mackerel, sardines.

IMPACT Expert Picks: Ascenta NutraSea Fish Oil; Barleans Flax Oil (vegetarian); Barleans Fish Oil.

IMPACT MAGAZINE GUIDE TO

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

IS COMPILED WITH THE EXPERT ASSISTANCE OF:



Dr. Melina Roberts, a naturopathic doctor and clinic director of Advanced Naturopathic Medical

Centre in Calgary, is a leading authority in the field of naturopathic medicine specializing in uncovering root causes of problems, digestive issues, hormonal balancing and chronic disease.



Dr. Kyley Hunt is a naturopathic doctor practicing in Calgary. Her practice focuses on

hormones, stress balancing, optimized nutrition and therapies such as neural and Bowen that address pain and injury while optimizing performance.



Dr. Ryan Nakama is a naturopath in Calgary who works with high performance athletes

and weekend warriors to improve performance, minimize injury and speed recovery.



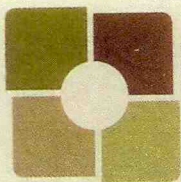
Thara Vayali is a rigorous researcher, creative teacher and problem solver. Her naturopathic practice is a blend of skilled diagnostics, intelligent biomechanics and health education. She practices in Vancouver.



Dr. Meaghan McCollum, is a naturopathic doctor in Calgary, with a practice focused on sports medicine.



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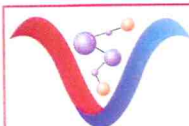
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COQ10

What it is: CoQ10 is an antioxidant that supports proper cellular function and energy production.

What it does: CoQ10 is a co-factor in a series of reactions that occur within cells to help with cellular respiration and ATP synthesis. ATP is the energy source for all cells and therefore CoQ10 can support proper function of all tissues and organs in the body. The more metabolically active the tissue, the more CoQ10 can support it. In the heart CoQ10 improves contraction and energy production of the cardiac muscle cells.

Why you might need it: CoQ10 helps to enhance aerobic capacity and muscle performance, especially of the heart muscle. Anyone taking statin drugs, such as Crestor, as these drugs stop the body's own production of CoQ10.

Who shouldn't use this: Reports show that CoQ10 is safe and well tolerated. Use with caution in cases of liver disease or when taking Warfarin. There is a lack of data on use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

What happens if you take too much: No toxicity has been reported, but long-term high dosing use may increase liver enzymes. In rare cases may cause nausea or a skin rash.

Where to get it: Typically taken as a supplement, available in small amounts in food, especially organ meats.

IMPACT Expert Picks: AOR Co-Enzyme Q10; Thorne Q-Best 100; Integrative Therapeutics UBQH; Bioclinic CoQ10.



TURMERIC

What it is: Curcuma longa is a perennial herb from the ginger family. Its rhizome, or rootstock, is the medicinal component. Compared to ginger, it is lightweight, has orange flesh and is full of a resin that has been harvested for thousands of years in Ayurvedic and Chinese medicines. It is used extensively in food for its bright orange/yellow colour and earthy flavour. It is used

for gastrointestinal complaints and new research is showing that turmeric has more widespread benefits.

What it does: The flavonoid, curcumin, is the most widely researched constituent of turmeric. It is an antioxidant, enhances antioxidant production in the body and decreases liver damage from exposure to toxic compounds. Curcumin is also cardioprotective, reduces cholesterol and triglycerides, decreases the oxidation of LDL cholesterol and inhibits platelet aggregation. In the gastrointestinal tract, turmeric has anti-inflammatory effects similar to NSAIDs, as well as the ability to inhibit intestinal spasm and assist digestive enzyme secretion. It is also effective both topically for wounds and systemically for inflammatory conditions.

Why you might need it: If you suffer irritable bowel syndrome, flatulence, intestinal inflammation, acute or chronic muscle and joint inflammation or to improve cardiovascular health.

Who shouldn't use this: Patients with bile duct obstruction, gallstones and GI disorders, including stomach ulcers and hyperacidity disorders, should not take this as a supplement.

What happens if you take too much: No significant adverse events have been reported with doses under 1g per day.

Where to get it: Turmeric root, as a powdered spice and supplements.

IMPACT Expert Picks: New Roots Curcumin 500; AOR-Curcumin-95; Thorne Meriva-SR; Bioclinic Naturals Theracurmin; Botanica Turmeric Phytocaps.



UNCOOKED VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

What it is: Uncooked virgin olive oil is composed primarily of monounsaturated fatty acids made from pressed ripe olives. Used extensively in the Mediterranean diet, in low-temperature cooking and in salad dressings. Extra Virgin and Virgin labels both refer to the purely mechanical cold-pressing of the olive, with no solvent treatments to adjust flavour or acidity. The term extra refers to the oil

having less than one per cent acidity, with a preferred flavour, texture and aroma profile. Virgin refers to less than two per cent acidity.

What it does: Olive oil and monounsaturated fatty acids have been extensively studied for their effect on the cardiovascular system. Compared to the oils found in the standard Western diet, olive oil and monounsaturated fatty acids have been shown to reduce the incidence of major cardiovascular events such as myocardial infarctions or stroke. The mechanism by which olive oil does this is unclear, but it is thought to reduce the development of atherosclerosis by reducing hypertension and inhibiting LDL cholesterol oxidation.

Why you might need it: Preventive care for heart disease, post myocardial infarction, post-stroke.

Who shouldn't use this: No one.

What happens if you take too much: You may encounter loose stool.

Where to get it: Most grocery stores. **IMPACT Expert Picks:** Spectrum Organic 100% First Cold Press Extra Virgin Olive Oil; Lucero Mission Certified Extra Virgin Olive Oil.



ARGININE

What it is: Arginine is an amino acid and precursor to nitrous oxide. It is considered a conditionally essential amino acid, meaning the body has the capacity to produce it on its own. However, under certain conditions of biochemical stress, this supply may not be sufficient for the body's requirements and external sources (dietary or supplementation) may be necessary.

What it does: The body converts L-arginine to nitrous oxide which causes blood vessel dilation and improves blood flow, including to the vessels that supply the heart. It also contributes to wound healing and immune function and may function in increasing growth hormone release from the pituitary gland.

Why you might need it: To improve conditions that benefit from vasodilation including elevated blood pressure or hypertension, angina pectoris, atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease, erectile dysfunction and peripheral vascular disease. L-arginine may also be useful for increasing athletic tolerance/performance and increasing human growth hormone production.

Who shouldn't use this: Use caution and consult a healthcare practitioner if you have a history of heart attack, or are using medication to lower blood pressure, heart medications (such as nitrates or nitroglycerin) or medications for erectile difficulty (Viagra/sildenafil, Cialis/tadalafil). It may not be appropriate for people with low blood pressure to use arginine as further decrease may occur. Arginine may also trigger herpes flare-up.

What happens if you take too much: It may lead to loose stools and stomach cramps. Dizziness and orthostatic hypotension are possible where adequate blood pressure cannot be maintained. Higher doses of arginine may have negative overall effects.

Where to get it: Nuts and seeds (sesame, sunflower, pumpkin),

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soy, chocolate, spinach, lentils, whole grains, seafood, poultry and dairy products.

IMPACT Expert Picks: AOR L-Arginine; Thorne Perfusia-SR; Life Choice L-Arginine.



BITTER FOODS

(BROCCOLI, KALE, SPINACH, GREEN TEA, BITTERS COMPOUND, APPLE CIDER VINEGAR)

What it is: A variety of foods with bitter taste that act to promote cardiovascular and digestive health.

What it does: Bitter foods help stimulate the digestive process and improve blood sugar levels. Broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables contain components such as sulforaphane that help to activate proteins that prevent atherosclerosis build-up in arteries. Similarly, in Chinese medicine, bitter foods help to clean blood vessels of fat and cholesterol deposits. Green tea contains catechins that help to balance lipid levels, reduce atherosclerosis, and improve overall vascular health. Certain bitter foods like bitter melon help to balance and control blood sugar.

Why you might need it: Bitter foods can help people with high blood pressure, increased blood lipids or atherosclerosis. Due to their flavour, bitter foods commonly make up a smaller portion of the diet, yet they contain a variety of beneficial components, so most people could benefit from increasing bitters in their diet. Taking bitters 15-20 minutes before meals can help improve digestion.

Who shouldn't use this: Vegetables in the brassica family (cabbage, broccoli, etc.) contain chemicals called goitrogens that can interfere with iodine usage and should not be used in excess in those with hypothyroid condition. Consult a healthcare professional before using green tea supplements if you have liver disorders.

What happens if you take too much: Minor gastrointestinal symptoms.

Where to get it: Food is the best source. Many mass producers have attempted to breed out the bitter taste of vegetables to make them more palatable. Choosing local and organic vegetables helps to ensure the healthy components are retained. Lightly

steaming helps to retain protective effects.

IMPACT Expert Picks: New Chapter Broccolive Plus; AOR Active Green Tea; Bragg raw unfiltered organic apple cider vinegar; St. Francis Herbs Canadian Bitters.



FIBRE

(PSYLLIUM, GROUND FLAX)

What it is: Dietary fibres are certain types of carbohydrates found in plant foods that are resistant to digestion and absorption in the human digestive tract.

There are two types of fibre: soluble and insoluble.

- Soluble fibres: oats, fruit, beans, legumes, psyllium, cucumbers, celery, carrots, flaxseeds.
- Insoluble fibres: grains, seeds, nuts, vegetables, fruit.

What it does: Soluble fibre absorbs water and forms a gel in the digestive tract, which slows digestion. This is the type of fibre that helps to lower LDL (or bad) cholesterol levels by binding cholesterol and interfering with its absorption (or reabsorption) in the gut. Insoluble fibre does not absorb water, but acts to add bulk to stools and help promote movement in the gut.

Why you might need it: Both psyllium and flaxseed contain mostly soluble fibre, making them great choices to prevent high cholesterol, obesity, constipation, diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome.

Who shouldn't use this: Everyone should have fibre in their diet. Use caution in inflammatory conditions of the large or small intestine, as some fibre can be irritating.

What happens if you take too much: Very large amounts of fibre can interfere with nutrient absorption. Other symptoms from too much fibre include diarrhea, constipation, gas and bloating. It's important to ensure adequate water consumption when taking extra fibre.

Where to get it: Fibres are found in plant foods and in any food store. Many supplemental fibres containing psyllium and flaxseed can be found in health food stores and pharmacies. Plant foods

contain a combination of soluble and insoluble fibres.

IMPACT Expert Picks: Organic Traditions ground flaxseed; Signature Supplements Fibre Formula.



VITAMIN E

What it is: Vitamin E is a group of fat soluble molecules called tocotrienols and

tocopherols. Gamma and alpha tocopherol are the most common forms of vitamin E in the North American diet. However all eight vitamin E molecules are important to health.

What it does: The vitamin E complex is a potent antioxidant, protecting cells in the body from free-radical damage.

Vitamin E also has anti-viral actions, is neuroprotective and helps prevent blood coagulation and the oxidation of "bad" or LDL cholesterol. High levels of only alpha tocopherol were associated with worsening of cardiovascular disease. However when taken with the rest of the vitamin E complex, it helps to reverse arterial thickening.

Why you might need it: If you have cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, hypertension or Alzheimer's disease.

Who shouldn't use this: Individuals with bleeding disorders or vitamin K deficiency. Do not use pre-surgery.

What happens if you take too much: It's important to get a supplement with mixed tocopherols and tocotrienols to get the full benefit. Supplementing with only alpha-tocopherol decreases the levels of the other vitamin E molecules, which has been shown to have negative health effects such as worsening of cardiovascular disease and an association with prostate cancer. Supplementing with more than 1,200 IU/day can interfere with vitamin A and vitamin K absorption. The upper limit in Canada is set at 1,500 IU/day due to its potential to increase bleeding.

Where to get it: Any health food store or natural pharmacy will have a high quality 'mixed' vitamin E product.

IMPACT Expert Picks: AOR total E. ■