



## **Dairy-Free Living**

Millions of people suffer from dairy-related intolerance or allergy.

Some people who avoid dairy are allergic to the dairy proteins themselves and must avoid all dairy products, including milk, cheese, butter, cream cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, ice cream, whey, or casein. Others avoid dairy because they lack the enzyme lactase, which digests milk sugar, lactose. People who are lactose-intolerant may choose to eliminate or reduce lactose-containing dairy products from their diet. There are many dairy substitutes available for those who need to avoid dairy products. Please note that dairy-free is not the same as egg-free.

### **Check for Hidden Sources**

Dairy ingredients come in many different forms, several with names more difficult to pronounce than "milk." The important thing is to be able to recognize them when they appear on a label. Look for: curds, whey, ghee, casein, rennet, casein, lactose, lactulose, whey and casein hydrolysates, lactalbumin, and lactoglobulin.

## **Wheat-Free Shopping**

While wheat is one of the major gluten-containing grains, it is important to remember that "wheat-free" does not mean the same thing as "gluten-free." Some people are allergic to gluten, a mixture of protein fragments found in common cereal grains, however, others are allergic to the protein in wheat itself, including wheat albumin and wheat globulins. People allergic to wheat will want to avoid wheat and its by-products.

## **GLUTEN FREE**

### **What is gluten?**

In terms of the medical definition of Celiac Disease, or Gluten Intolerance, "gluten" is defined as the mixture of many protein fragments (called peptide chains or polypeptides) found in common cereal grains — wheat, rye, barley and sometimes oats (oats don't naturally contain gluten, but are often subject to contamination with small amounts). Wheat is the only grain considered to contain true "gluten" and the peptides that predominate in wheat gluten are gliadin and glutenin.

## **SPELT**

Spelt is similar to wheat in appearance. However, spelt has a tougher husk than wheat, which may help protect the nutrients in spelt. Spelt flour has a somewhat nuttier and slightly sweeter flavor than whole wheat flour. Spelt contains more protein than wheat, and the protein in spelt is easier to digest. This means that



some people who are allergic to wheat may be able to tolerate spelt. Spelt has gluten, just like wheat, so spelt is not suitable for a gluten-free diet.

## **Nutrition for Kids & Teens**

Kids have different nutritional needs at different times in their lives. These tips will help guide you through some of the milestones.

### **Nutrition Tips for Preschool to Preteen**

From preschool age and even into the early adolescent years, parents still have a lot of influence over what their children eat. Maintaining positive habits at home is especially important since kids will increasingly make choices of their own away from home and with friends.

- Make calories count. This may sound like adult dieting advice, but what it really means is try to make sure every bite your child eats is as nutrition packed as possible. Allowing them to fill up on non-nutritive calories (like too much juice for instance) can displace the nutritious foods they would have otherwise eaten.
- Choose whole grains and whole grain products (breads, pastas, brown rice, bulgur, oatmeal) instead of refined grain products.
- Limit access to “junk” foods, but provide some alternative sweet options. Making all sweets forbidden may only intensify a child’s attraction to them.
- Model good nutrition choices. If you choose chips instead of a baked potato, you can’t expect them to do the opposite.
- Fill nutrition gaps with snacks. What your child eats between meals is just as important as what is eaten during meals. Put as much thought into offering healthy choices.
- Discourage the habit of eating and watching television simultaneously. You might choose to limit television, which has been linked with childhood and adolescent obesity.
- For older children and adolescents concerned about their weight, teach them that physical activity (rather than dieting) is the best route for weight loss.

### **Nutrition Tips for Teens**

Now that they are making many of their own food choices, teens need to be educated about the role nutrition plays in leading happy, productive lives. Explaining the benefits of eating well in ways that matter to teens, like improved performance in school or sports for instance, can motivate them to eat well.



- Teens need more vitamin C, calcium and iron than adults. Dietary surveys show deficiencies in adolescent girls.
- Calcium, best when obtained along with magnesium and vitamin D, are important for bone support. Getting these now will help protect bones later.
- For healthy skin, teens need lots of nutrients, water, fibre and essential fats—and less sugar and highly processed foods and drinks.
- Teens who eat on the run, are active in sports or are concerned about weight should consider a good supplement to help fill the gaps in their nutrient intake.
- The teen years can be very stressful, which can affect everything from skin to decision making to eating habits. Help your teen learn coping skills for stress.

### **Nutrition Tips for Young Vegetarians**

Whether your child chooses a vegetarian diet based on ethical or religious concerns or because her friends at school are doing it too, it's important to understand the implications. For children, whose bodies are still developing and who may consume a limited variety of foods compared to most adults, many experts recommend paying special attention to potential dietary weaknesses that may come from consuming only plant-based foods.

Nutrients to keep tabs on include: protein, iron, B vitamins, zinc, iodine and essential fatty acids, as well as calcium and vitamin D.

Eating vegetarian doesn't automatically mean healthy eating. Remember there are just as many vegetarian junk foods as there are for meat-eaters: chips, crisps, cookies, ice cream, and more. There is plenty of support available for those who are committed to growing healthy on a vegetarian or vegan diet, but it's important to identify the priority foods that contain these vital building blocks for optimal health.

### **Nutrition for Pregnant and Nursing Mums**

So much to eat, so little time! With all the excitement, exhaustion and long lists of to-dos, many expectant and nursing moms wonder how they will ever manage to work in all the extra meals, calories and nutrients recommended by the experts. Giving preference to nutrition-packed power foods is one way to help reach your daily quota.

#### **Top 10 Power Foods**

The following foods belong at the top of any mom's priority list because they contain nutrients especially important for pregnant and lactating women—and they also can deliver a powerful nutritional punch to everyone at your dinner table, so now is the time to start incorporating them into your family's meals for life.

- **Yoghurt** for calcium and probiotics.



Calcium needs increase during pregnancy. Consume any less than the recommended amount and your body will meet your baby's calcium needs by pulling from your own supply. In addition to being high in calcium, yoghurt is fermented, so it also provides beneficial probiotic bacteria, which promotes intestinal and immune health. In essence, probiotics help to maintain the natural balance of our "intestinal ecosystems." Other, non-dairy sources of calcium include dark, leafy greens, sardines with bones, calcium-fortified orange juice, sesame seeds, almonds, dried fruit, corn tortillas, tofu and legumes.

- **Dark, leafy greens** for calcium, fibre, vitamins and folic acid.

Kale, collards and other dark, leafy greens are rich with calcium, fibre, vitamins A and C, and also rate high on the antioxidant scale. (Note: Due to their oxalic acid content, which decreases the absorption of minerals, spinach and Swiss chard are not thought to be a good source of calcium or iron.) And these dark, leafy greens optimise calcium absorption because of their phosphorous content. They are also an important source of folic acid, which is recommended in higher amounts for all women in their childbearing years to help prevent neural tube defects in their children. Other sources of folic acid include oranges, beans, asparagus, avocados and berries.

- **Eggs** for vitamin A, iron and protein.

Eggs contain important nutrients, including vitamin A, iron and protein. Protein needs increase during pregnancy, and adequate protein intake often helps to temper sugar cravings. Note that most of the nutrition in eggs is found in the yolk. For extra nutrition, look for eggs enriched with DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid important for brain development.

- **Fatty fish** for omega-3s.

Salmon, sardines, black cod, anchovies, herring and trout provide omega-3 fatty acids, which are the primary components of brain tissue and are vital for brain and visual development. Studies have shown that women who eat fish during pregnancy have children with better visual acuity, higher IQ, better language and communication skills, and decreased rates of allergies and asthma. However, pregnant and lactating women should limit their intake to no more than 12 ounces (2 servings) of low-mercury fish per week, and should also avoid larger, long-lived fish with more dark meat (including tuna, shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish). Fish with dangerous amounts of mercury may harm a baby's developing nervous system.

- **Lamb** for B12, iron and zinc.



Lamb is an excellent source of vitamin B12 and a good source of highly accessible iron and zinc. Zinc is important for growth and development because it is required for cell division, DNA/RNA synthesis and protein synthesis. Adequate zinc levels also ensure optimal bone growth in developing babies and are necessary for immunity. Vegetarian sources of zinc include legumes (especially adzuki, navy beans and split peas), nuts and seeds (especially pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and cashews), whole grains (fortified cereal and wheat germ) and fortified soy foods. It is best to eat calcium-rich foods and zinc-rich foods at different times for optimal absorption of each.

- **Berries** for antioxidants and fibre.

These colourful fruits top the charts with their antioxidant content and have been shown to help with brain, eye and vascular health. Antioxidants are compounds that protect cells from free radical damage. Berries also provide fibre, which is beneficial for pregnant women.

This is one comfort food that has an appealing nutritional profile. Sweet potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin A (as colourful beta carotene) and a good source of vitamin E. By eating sweet potatoes with a little fat, you can increase the absorption of these nutrients. Eat the skin for added nutritional benefit.

- **Avocados** for potassium, folic acid, vitamin C, lutein and "good" fat.

Nutrient-dense avocados contain healthy monounsaturated fats, as well as significant quantities of the antioxidant lutein, which has been shown to be beneficial for eye health.

- **Legumes** for vegetarian protein, fibre, iron, folate, magnesium and zinc.

Legumes (a plant food category that includes certain pods, beans and peas) are a good source of vegetarian protein and are rich in fibre. Many varieties are also an excellent source of iron, folate and magnesium. Legumes (especially adzuki, navy beans and split peas) are also a good alternative source of zinc for vegetarians.

- **Nuts** for fibre, vitamin E and magnesium.

Specific types of nuts have their own nutritional advantages. For example, walnuts have omega-3 fatty acids, and almonds provide calcium. Although nuts are high in fat, they contain primarily monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat, and have not been shown to promote weight gain when eaten in moderation (about a small handful five times a week).



## Fast Fact

Lactation consultants often advise that breastfed babies may develop a taste for whatever Mom eats because it is known that amniotic fluid and breast milk provide flavour exposure to baby.

One thing you'll notice about these power foods is that many of them are vibrantly colourful. When faced with unfamiliar choices on a restaurant menu or buffet, an easy way to get a good dose of the recommended nutrients is to decorate your plate with a rainbow. As a general rule, have at least three natural colours on your plate at each meal.

## Consumption Cautions

From conception through breastfeeding, remember your baby is getting a share of everything you eat or drink. Your best bet to ensure you are making wise choices is to follow your health practitioner's advice along with these general guidelines that apply to most pregnant and nursing moms:

- Take a **prenatal multivitamin** with no artificial additives, colours or flavours, beginning before you conceive if possible and continuing through breastfeeding.
- **Drink plenty of water**, preferably filtered.
- **Avoid or limit caffeine** according to the latest guidelines.
- **Avoid alcoholic beverages.**
- **Choose organic** foods and beverages to reduce exposure to pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and synthetic fertilizers.
- **Boost your protein intake** with meats, poultry, eggs, dairy products, tofu, beans and nuts.
- Be aware that **undercooked meat, poultry and fish**, as well as **unpasteurised dairy products and juice** may contain potentially harmful bacteria.
- **Steer clear of high-mercury seafood.** The FDA provides specific guidelines for which species should be avoided or limited.
- **Get your DHA** (docosahexaenoic acid), the essential fatty acid found in fatty fish and fish oil, that is vital for a baby's brain and nervous system.
- **Eliminate hydrogenated fats**, which can inhibit the utilization of omega-3 fatty acids vital for brain development.

When **exhaustion or morning sickness** strike, there are many natural ways to relieve discomfort. Start by eating something—such as crackers—before you get out of bed. Ginger or ginger tea can also help promote a calm stomach. Eating small meals and small sips of fluid all day, including plenty of fibre and water for healthy digestion, can also help sustain your energy and keep many pregnancy symptoms at



bay. Be sure to exercise, per your health practitioner's recommendations, and get plenty of rest and relaxation.

**Some herbal teas or supplements, depending** on stage of pregnancy or nursing, may also be comforting and helpful for morning sickness and other concerns during pregnancy and lactation, but be sure to consult with your practitioner before consuming any herbal supplements. Some must be used with care and others avoided all together at certain times from conception through breastfeeding.

### **Tips for Nursing Moms**

While breastfeeding, keep the following special suggestions in mind:

- Don't limit nutrient-rich foods to lose weight. Despite your longing for that pre-pregnancy body, now is not the time to cut calories. Your diet is vitally important to your baby and to rebuilding your nutrient stores.
- Certain foods eaten by mums can disagree with some breastfed babies. If you experience problems, experiment with eliminating: broccoli family veggies (including cabbage and cauliflower), eggs, milk, soy, peanuts, citrus fruits, gluten-containing foods, spicy foods or chocolate.
- Many herbs promote the secretion and flow of breast milk. Look for herb teas specific for nursing mothers.

### **Natural Choices Inside and Out**

During pregnancy and nursing, it's also wise to scrutinize products you use on your body and in your home. Natural choices are generally the best bet for avoiding potentially harmful substances.

Remember that body care products (skin, hair and oral products) are absorbed into the body at varying concentrations, and your baby may be exposed to them. Choose products that are as natural as possible, avoid synthetic scents, and dilute products containing 100% pure essential oils in equal parts with unscented varieties.

**Aromatherapy** may also be helpful to relax and relieve pregnancy discomforts, but only 100% pure essential oils provide benefits and synthetic scents may be harmful. Before using essential oils, always consult your practitioner, and research varieties and usage specific to your stage of motherhood. For example, during pregnancy, avoid essential oils of cedar wood, citronella, marjoram, myrrh, rosemary, rose, clary sage, lemon balm and peppermint. Essential oils are highly concentrated and should never be used directly on skin.

Keep in mind that other **products you use around the house** can also contain toxic ingredients that you may not want to come in contact with during pregnancy. This includes household cleaning products and air fresheners, lawn and garden



products, paints, glues, new carpet and cigarette smoke. To play it safe, many parents choose to reduce exposure to potentially harmful chemicals present in many of these products when the baby's endocrine system is vulnerable and major organ systems are developing. This can be especially important during the first trimester. But don't stop there! Why expose your child—or yourself—to these things at any age when there are plenty of safer alternatives?

## **Nutritional Support for Men**

A good, wholesome, well-balanced diet provides a spectrum of vitamins and minerals in addition to the basics of protein, fat, and carbohydrates. Even when eating well, a quality multi-vitamin formula can act as a nutritional insurance policy. Other beneficial nutrients may be difficult to obtain from food sources alone. The following list provides details on many important nutrients. Check out the ones appropriate for everyone and then look over the additional needs for your specific age group.

### **All Age Groups**

#### **Omega-3 Fatty Acids**

These are "essential" fatty acids, meaning the body does not make these necessary fats on its own so you must get them from the food you eat.

Omega-3s provide many wonderful benefits including the promotion of mental<sup>2</sup> and immune health, and they can also be good for your heart. Researchers have found that those who consume fatty fish one or more times a week have a lower risk of having a fatal heart attack.

Two important Omega-3 fatty acids include DHA (docosahexanoic acid) and EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), both of which are found in fatty cold-water fish such as salmon, mackerel, and tuna. Another Omega-3 fat, called ALA (alpha-linolenic acid) is found in dark leafy greens, flax seed oil, and walnuts. Consider supplementing if fish or flax seed is not a regular part of your diet.

#### **Antioxidants**

Antioxidants are becoming popular as more and more research points to their ability to protect your body against damage from free radicals (unstable oxygen molecules). Every day, people are exposed to free radicals from such varied sources as air pollution, sunlight, smoking, exercise, poor diet, and stress. All of this can cause damage to cells.

Antioxidants can provide needed protection from free radical molecules.



The body can regenerate its own antioxidants, and you can get them from food — they are abundant in colourful fruits and vegetables. Many health professionals recommend adding an antioxidant supplement to your daily regime, especially if you're at risk for certain diseases.

## **Vitamin C**

Vitamin C is critical to immune function and is an important antioxidant.

Vitamin C is necessary for the synthesis and maintenance of collagen, the primary protein found in connective tissue.

Dietary sources of C include citrus fruits, berries, green and leafy vegetables, tomatoes, and green peppers. It can be difficult to obtain adequate levels through food sources alone because Vitamin C is sensitive to light, air and heat; certain conditions, such as smoking and stress, increase the need for Vitamin C.,

The Reference Daily Intake (RDI) is 60 mg per day.

## **Beta Carotene**

This powerful antioxidant lends carrots their deep orange colour, and the body turns it into Vitamin A.

Vitamin A enhances the health of the skin's epithelial tissue and is essential for the production of mucous membranes and the respiratory tract. This vitamin is also an important component for the production and activity of certain types of white blood cells. Studies show that maintaining high levels of Vitamin A enhances many immune system processes.

Good food sources include green plants, carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash, spinach, and apricots.

## **Vitamin E**

Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant that may help to protect the body's cells from oxidants, such as smoke and pollution.

In addition to its antioxidant properties, Vitamin E is also crucial for a healthy immune system, and it may help lower risk for heart disease as it may prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol.

Although nuts, seeds, whole grains, avocados, sweet potatoes, egg yolks, and green leafy vegetables are all food sources of Vitamin E, supplementation may be necessary since the protective levels used in most studies (100–800 I.U. per day) cannot be obtained through food sources alone.



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The RDI is 30 I.U. per day.

## **Selenium**

This trace mineral works in conjunction with Vitamin E.

To protect the body's cells from oxidation.

Selenium is found in many foods, including shellfish and liver as well as vegetables, grains, and nuts that are grown in selenium-rich soil.

The RDI for selenium is 70 mcg for men; doses higher than 200 micrograms per day are generally not recommended.

## **No Added Iron**

Most men get enough iron from food and should not need to supplement as too much iron can be harmful.

The concern is high circulating iron levels, since excessive amounts can increase the risk of certain diseases.

If blood test results show your iron level is in the upper half of normal range or higher, switch to a vitamin supplement with no added iron and consider donating blood several times a year, as well as reducing your intake of red meat.

## **Nutritional Support for Women**

### **Smart Choices for Nutritional Supplements**

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Antioxidants can provide needed protection from free radical molecules.

The body can regenerate its own antioxidants, and you can get them from food - they are abundant in colourful fruits and vegetables. Many health professionals recommend adding an antioxidant supplement to your daily regime, especially if you're at risk for certain diseases.

## **Vitamin C**

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Vitamin C is necessary for the synthesis and maintenance of collagen, the primary protein found in connective tissue.

Dietary sources of C include citrus fruits, berries, green and leafy vegetables, tomatoes, and green peppers. It can be difficult to obtain adequate levels through food sources alone because Vitamin C is sensitive to light, air, and heat; certain conditions, such as smoking and stress, increase the need for Vitamin C.

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Vitamin A enhances the health of the skin's epithelial tissue and is essential for the production of mucous membranes and the respiratory tract. This vitamin is also an important component for the production and activity of certain types of white blood cells. Studies show that maintaining high levels of Vitamin A enhances many immune system processes.

Good food sources include green plants, carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash, spinach, and apricots.

## **Vitamin D**

Vitamin D is critically important for bone health.

It facilitates the absorption of calcium from the intestines. Unfortunately, many American adults do not get enough Vitamin D. Levels may especially be low in the elderly, in those who are housebound or inactive, and in those who live in northern climates. If you suspect you do not get enough sunshine and Vitamin D, talk with your doctor about adding a supplement.

Vitamin D is synthesized in the skin from exposure to sunlight, and is also found in eggs, butter, liver, fatty fish, and milk. Being exposed to 10 to 15 minutes of sunlight just a few days a week without wearing sunscreen can help to meet your Vitamin D needs.

Supplementation is safe and effective if taken within a dosage of 400 I.U. (the RDI) to 800 I.U. per day.

## **Calcium**

Calcium is essential for blood clotting, nerve transmission, and muscle contractions in addition to its critical role in building strong bones and teeth.

Research has shown that supplemental calcium significantly relieves such premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms such as water retention, mood swings, food cravings, and pain. Although it is never too late to support and nourish your bones, early intervention through adequate calcium intake, regular exercise, and a whole foods diet rich in fresh, unprocessed foods will help prevent bone loss in later years.

Good sources of calcium are dairy products, canned salmon with bones, and leafy green vegetables.

According to the National Academy of Sciences, a woman between the ages of 20 and 50 needs a minimum of 1,000 mg of calcium per day while women over 50 need at least 1,200 mg daily. This will vary depending upon several factors, including pregnancy, lactation, and any medications being taken.



## **Magnesium**

A diet low in magnesium yet high in calcium can actually contribute to osteoporosis. Women with PMS are often deficient in magnesium. Magnesium works in concert with calcium and essential fatty acids for many critical functions in the body, including bone, protein, and cell formation.

Unless your diet includes heavy amounts of nuts, seeds, whole grains, beans, and dark green leafy vegetables — all good food sources of this important mineral — it can be difficult to obtain recommended amounts from diet alone.

The RDI for magnesium is 400 mg per day.

### **Women ages 20 to 39**

In addition to the previously mentioned nutrients, the following are important additions to women ages 20 to 39:

#### **Protein**

Reproductive health and sexual function depend on a healthy diet with adequate nutrient intake, including sufficient amounts of protein.

Protein builds and maintains muscle tissue and helps the body to heal and repair itself.

Protein is found in abundance in fish, beef, poultry, wild game, eggs, dairy products, soybeans, and legumes.

#### **Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine)**

A number of studies have found that B6 relieves PMS symptoms and decreases the intensity and duration of menstrual cramps.

Not stored in the body, Vitamin B6 needs to be replaced by whole foods or supplements within eight hours. Good dietary sources include meats, eggs, whole grains, leafy greens, nuts, and seeds. Vitamin B6 is generally available in a multivitamin formula or a basic Vitamin B complex.

The RDI for Vitamin B6 is 2 mg per day.

#### **Folic Acid (folate)**

An adequate supply of this B vitamin is important for women, in particular during the first trimester of pregnancy.



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Studies have shown that supplementation with folic acid around the time of conception can reduce the risk of having a child with neural tube defects.<sup>10</sup> Folic acid is also extremely heart-friendly.

Folic acid is found in leafy greens, citrus fruits, beans, and wheat germ, and is generally available in a multivitamin formula or a basic Vitamin B complex.

According to The National Academy of Sciences, all women of childbearing age need to have 400 micrograms daily (600 micrograms when pregnant).

## **Iron**

Many young women do not get enough iron, a critical mineral that can be lost while menstruating.

Iron is necessary for good energy as it increases the blood's ability to carry oxygen. Fatigue, weakness, pale skin and lips, and a tendency to feel cold may be signs of iron deficiency anaemia.

A diet including iron-rich foods (such as, liver, lean red meat, shellfish, and dried beans) may also be complemented by a supplement.

The RDI for iron for women in this age group is 15 mg (30 mg when pregnant).

## **Chaste Tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*)**

Grown in Mediterranean countries and central Asia, vitex has a long history of medicinal use. Well-respected as a woman's herb, vitex was recommended by Hippocrates for a wide variety of conditions.

Although it does not contain hormones, vitex acts upon the pituitary gland to increase progesterone production and helps with regulating the menstrual cycle. One study found that women taking vitex have significant relief from symptoms ranging from breast tenderness to cramping and headaches.

Chaste Tree is available in herbal and supplement form.

## **Women ages 40 to 59**

In addition to the previously mentioned nutrients, the following are important additions to women ages 40 to 59:

### **Soy Isoflavones**

Soybeans are a rich source of phytoestrogens, primarily the isoflavones daidzein and genistein.



A number of studies have linked these isoflavones to the low rate of breast cancer in the Asian population. Studies also show that Japanese women who consume an average of 150–200 milligrams of isoflavones daily, compared to 5 milligrams in the average Western diet, generally have fewer difficulties associated with menopause, including hot flashes. Soy isoflavones are available in a variety of soybean-based foods such as tofu, tempeh, soy milk, miso, and soybeans themselves, called edamame.

## **Phytoestrogens**

Although soy foods often command the spotlight for their isoflavone properties, many other foods also share the stage as sources of these helpful phytoestrogens — oestrogen-like substances found in certain plants that bind to oestrogen receptor sites in the body.

A recent study suggests plant-based estrogens appear to offer many of the benefits provided by hormone replacement therapy (HRT) but without the risk associated with oestrogen supplements. Along with their heart-protective properties, other benefits of phytoestrogens include a decrease in the number of hot flashes, decreased risk of breast cancer, and protection against osteoporosis.

Evidence has shown adzuki beans, mung beans, fava beans, and bean sprouts contain similar isoflavones as soy. Other foods that contain significant amounts of phytoestrogens are cashews, peanuts, oats, corn, wheat, apples, and almonds.

## **Black Cohosh**

Long known as a "woman's herb," the dried root and rhizome of black cohosh have been used traditionally for hundreds of years by native Americans for conditions ranging from gynecological problems to rheumatism.

Clinical studies from Germany have demonstrated that extract of black cohosh, considered a prime woman's tonic, is a promising treatment for hot flashes.

Black cohosh is available in herbal and supplement form.

## **Red Clover**

Grown throughout Europe and North America, red clover has been widely used in traditional folk medicine for decades. Red clover also contains high amounts of isoflavone compounds called phytoestrogens.

Various studies have indicated that these isoflavone compounds may help stabilize various menopausal symptoms.

Red clover is available in herbal and supplement form.



## **Cool Down**

For women who experience them, hot flashes are serious business. Building up your overall health is one way to "cool down" these episodes of intense heat. Hot flashes are also affected by stress, anger, heat, and vasodilators (substances that dilate the blood vessels) such as caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods. Keep your bedroom cool and wear light, breathable fibres such as silk. Cooling foods like chilled soups, cucumbers, yoghurt, and fresh fruit may also help.

## **Women ages 60 and Beyond**

In addition to the previously mentioned nutrients, the following are important additions to women ages 60 and beyond:

### **Coenzyme Q10 (also called CoQ10)**

This powerful antioxidant occurs naturally in the human body, with abundance in heart tissue.

Added as a supplement, CoQ10 may help people with heart disease, who tend to have lower amounts of this compound in their bodies. deficient, the heart muscle may weaken and become less efficient at pumping blood.

Since obtaining enough CoQ10 through dietary sources alone is extremely difficult, it's important to add this supplement to your diet.

### **Vitamin E**

There are currently hundreds of studies supporting the benefits of this powerful antioxidant in reducing the risk of heart disease — a concern for many post-menopausal women.

Studies also show promising results in decreasing symptoms such as headache, fatigue, depression, and insomnia.

Although wheat germ oil, nuts, seeds, whole grains, egg yolks, and green leafy vegetables are all food sources of Vitamin E, supplementation may be necessary since the protective levels used in most studies (100–800 I.U. per day) cannot be obtained through food sources alone.

The RDI for Vitamin E is 30 I.U.

### **Vitamin B6**

Vitamin B6 may help protect against heart disease.



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Taken along with folic acid and Vitamin B12, it helps the body to process homocysteine, an amino acid that can be indicative of heart disease risk at elevated levels.

It is generally available in a multivitamin formula or a basic Vitamin B complex, although good dietary sources include meats, eggs, whole grains, leafy greens, nuts, and seeds.

The RDI for Vitamin B6 is 2 mg per day.

### **Folic Acid (folate)**

This B vitamin is very heart-friendly.

Folic Acid helps protect your heart and arteries by keeping homocysteine levels in blood from rising. Excess homocysteine has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease. Heavy consumption of meat and dairy products increase homocysteine levels.

Foods rich in folic acid include leafy greens, citrus fruits, beans, and wheat germ.

The RDI for folic acid is 400 mcg per day.

### **Vitamin B12**

Critical to the formation of healthy red blood cells, Vitamin B12 is also crucial to adults with Crohn's disease or other gastrointestinal problems in addition to strict vegetarians who don't eat any meat or animal products. Symptoms of deficiency include muscle weakness, tingling and numbness in the extremities, low energy, fatigue, depression, and confusion. Consult your health care provider if you suspect a deficiency.

Vitamin B12 also contributes to a healthy immune system and may be useful for maintaining heart health.

Sources of Vitamin B12 include eggs, meat, fish, liver, and cheese. While only a very small amount is necessary, many older adults may have difficulties absorbing Vitamin B12.

The RDI for Vitamin B12 is 6 mcg per day.

### **Nourish Your Heart**

Heart disease is a health concern in women over the age of 55. In addition to regular exercise and keeping blood pressure low, consider adding such heart healthy herbs as hawthorn berry, lemon balm, and garlic to your diet on a daily basis.