



Eating for Heart Health

February is American Heart Month. It is a month to spread awareness about heart disease and how people can prevent it. For nearly 90 years heart disease has been the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States!

When it comes to heart disease prevention, some of the biggest impacts are on what not to do, but there are also important nutrients that can help to reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

The big no-no's are to avoid smoking, avoid partially/fully hydrogenated oils, and to minimize (or avoid) heavily processed vegetable oils that are high in polyunsaturated fats (soybean oil, canola oil, corn oil, cottonseed oil, grapeseed oil, safflower oil). These are the main ways LDL cholesterol becomes oxidized. Oxidized cholesterol is very damaging to your artery walls, it becomes sticky and can build up in your bloodstream, and it creates inflammation in the body; all of which leads to developing heart disease.

There are several nutrients that can be beneficial to the heart, but our focus is going to be on those that decrease inflammation and protect LDL from becoming oxidized.

♥ Omega-3's

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential to the body and deliver some big health benefits. The longer chain (EPA and DHA) are the form that the body uses and are found in cold-water, fatty fish like salmon, sardines, tuna, mackerel. The shorter chain (ALA) are found in flaxseed, walnuts, chia seeds and pumpkin seeds and must be elongated by the body before they can be used. Unfortunately, this elongation process is very insufficient, so your biggest impact will come from consuming the longer chain, EPA and DHA. Omega-3's decrease inflammation in the body, help to thin the blood, and relax the blood vessels.

♥ Vitamins C and E

Vitamins C and E are both antioxidants. This means they protect LDL cholesterol from being oxidized. Vitamin C is found in fruits and veggies with some of the highest sources coming from red bell peppers, citrus, kiwi, and broccoli. Vitamin E is found in nuts, seeds, and vegetable oils (focus on heart healthy oleic acid sources).

Resources: *Omega-3 Supplements and Cardiovascular Disease, Role of oleic acid in immune system; mechanism of action; a review, Linus Pauling Institute*

♥ Monounsaturated Fats

Monounsaturated fats are found in olive oil, avocado/oil, nuts (especially high in almonds and hazelnuts), and high-oleic sunflower. The main fatty acid found in monounsaturated fats is called oleic acid. Research is showing that oleic acid acts as an anti-inflammatory in the body. Just one of the reasons monounsaturated fats are considered heart healthy.

♥ Flavonoids

Flavonoids is a large phytochemical family that are powerful antioxidants. They are 100 times stronger than vitamin E when it comes to their antioxidant function. They protect LDL from oxidation, they decrease inflammation, increase dilation of blood vessels, prevent blood platelets from sticking together, and prevent cells from sticking to the arterial wall. Foods like cocoa-based products (dark chocolate), green and white tea, red, blue, and purple berries, red and purple grapes, and apples are excellent sources of flavonoids; a great food to eat for heart health!



RECIPE Alaska Sockeye Salmon Bites

Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon avocado oil or extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped fine
- 1 Tablespoon grated ginger
- ¼ cup dry white wine or mirin (rice cooking wine)
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon orange juice
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1-1/2 to 2 pounds Alaska Sockeye salmon, fresh or thawed, cut into 2-inch pieces
- Green onion curls or cilantro (optional for garnish)

Directions

1. In a sauce pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Sauté garlic and ginger until soft. Add the wine or mirin, soy sauce, orange juice and honey; simmer until reduced by half. When cool, add Alaska Sockeye Salmon pieces to marinade and marinate for 3 to 5 minutes, turning to coat all sides.
2. Grill salmon pieces over medium heat on grill or grill top, cooking just until fish is opaque throughout.
3. Garnish with green onion curls or cilantro, if desired. Skewer with wooden picks to serve.

Makes: 36 Bites

Photo and adapted recipe from Wild Alaska Salmon & Seafood Company.

About Wild Alaska Salmon & Seafood Company

Wild Alaska Salmon & Seafood is a family-owned company committed to providing the highest quality salmon from the icy waters of Bristol Bay. Their methods of fishing are designed to catch only sustainable resource salmon; other species of fish and wildlife are not harmed or caught. As the salmon are caught, the fish are delivered on ice to shore straight from their boat on a daily basis, and are at once cleaned and hand-processed by their own processing team. This is called a "wet process".

The salmon is then immediately "flash frozen," meaning that the product is deep frozen very quickly after the catch and packaged in vacuum sealed bags to lock in all of the quality and freshness.

Your Green Bean Delivery Shopping List!



Tuna



Flaxseed



Blueberries



Sardines



Avocado Oil



Beets



Salmon



Bell Peppers



Green Tea



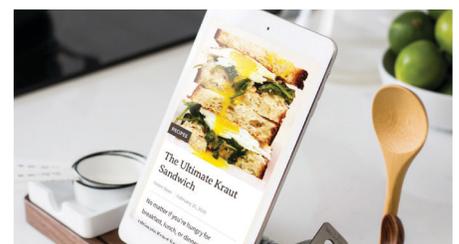
Walnuts



Kiwi



Dark Chocolate



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