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Eat Right for Cardiovascular Health!

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that adults are consuming 15 percent of their calories from sugars added to foods during processing. Moreover, just drinking one 12-oz pop each day can increase your cardiovascular risk by 30 percent. Many studies have also linked the consumption of added sugar in the diet to the development of diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. Read your labels – and try to keep your added sugars to less than 10 percent of your calories.

Improve Your Cholesterol Levels

Many people argue that the cholesterol that comes from the diet is less important than the cholesterol your body manufactures, when it comes to cardiovascular disease. That said, there are foods you can consume which will actually help fight the cholesterol in your system. Oats and beans supply soluble fibre, associated with lowering those bad LDLs. Fatty fish (such as salmon) and nuts (such as walnuts) also help, as well has foods with added sterols and stanols.

Simple, healthy dietary changes can help improve your cholesterol levels. The information labels on foods are a big help. Take note of the fat content and avoid saturated and trans fats in favour of (poly)unsaturated ones. Look to increase your proportion of whole grains, which make you feel full, even out your blood sugar and supply important fibre. Eat more fruits and vegetables and, wherever possible, opt for low fat or fat-free and no added sugar options.

Understand Your Risk!

Cardiovascular disease is the second leading cause of death in Canada (after all cancers), so much effort is put into better understanding and managing it. The Canadian treatment guidelines emphasize the use of statins as a cornerstone of therapy – statins have been a “game-changer” when it comes to reducing cardiovascular risk! Evidence supports the use of the Framingham Score to assess your level of risk and narrow your treatment options.

Your pharmacist can help you perform a Framingham assessment of your individual risk of developing cardiovascular disease. The more you know, the better you can manage your health!