



February 23rd, 2015

Heart Health: Make an Impact During Heart Month

February is Heart month. You've probably heard it before, but consuming "processed" foods has been associated with increased health risks, such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity. A large part of this has been thought to be the added salt in these foods, but current research is suggesting that added sugars may be just as bad a culprit. Since neither is good for you, and since there are often other issues such as low fibre, the bottom line is: avoid processed foods.

Fibre & Heart Attacks

Dietary fibre plays an important role in our bodies, playing a role in bowel health, weight & diabetes management, and lowering cholesterol. Now, two large studies are demonstrating that increasing dietary fibre actually improves survival following a heart attack – for every extra 10 grams consumed daily, there was a 15% reduction in mortality. Just goes to show, it's never too late to make positive changes for your health!

A Daily Low Dose of ASA – Good or Bad?

Low dose aspirin (ASA) gets a lot of press about its ability to help prevent heart attacks. However, any dose of ASA has potential side effects, such as GI bleeding or drug interactions. Convention wisdom suggests not using ASA in patients who have heart failure, but new research is suggesting that it may be helpful to these patients as well. The results weren't dramatic enough to recommend its use, but, if needed for other reasons, it may be okay to take after all.

Often prescribed to patients who have suffered a heart attack, low dose ASA has been shown to reduce the risk of a second attack as well as improve survival when taken in the actual throes of a heart attack. Available without a prescription, many people assume it is safe and will take it in an attempt to prevent any heart attack, however the evidence says it plays no role in the primary prevention of a myocardial infarction (heart attack) and places the user at risk of side effects.

The circumstances for the use of medications vary from individual to individual. Never share medicines or make assumptions about their safety. Talk to your pharmacist for the real low-down on optimal drug use.