

## **EATING CORRECTLY FOR MAINTAINING A HEART**

**By**

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The growth of heart diseases is dependent on a number of interlinked factors such as aging, changing lifestyles and food habits, and other rapidly evolving socioeconomic determinants across most developing nations. All these factors together result in an increased incidence of cardiovascular diseases(CVDs).

CVDs are becoming an increasing health concern these days due to various reasons like unhealthy eating habits, work and personal life related-stress, sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercises. Heart problems also get coupled with high cholesterol levels and blood pressure too. CVDs are the largest cause of mortality, accounting for around half of all deaths resulting from NCDs. A more worrying fact is that the incidences of CVDs have gone up significantly for people between the ages 25 and 69 to 24.8%, which means we are losing more productive people to these diseases.

Higher income levels and globalization have induced a nutritional shift resulting in the rise of unhealthy food and decreased intake of fruits and vegetables. This, coupled with reduced physical activity, gives rise to intermediate risk factors such as hypertension and obesity. However, only exercising isn't sufficient to maintain a healthy heart. One needs to eat correctly in order to maintain a healthy heart.

### **Green leafy vegetables**

Green leafy vegetable like spinach, fenugreek, radish leaves, lettuce, etc. are healthy and are known to reduce the risk of heart diseases and cancer as well. That's because they are extremely low in fat, calories and high in dietary fibre. They also contain folic acid, magnesium, calcium, potassium, etc. These minerals are beneficial for the optimum functioning of the heart. Studies have shown that one daily serving of green leafy vegetables can lower the risk of heart diseases by 11 per cent.

### **Oats**

Oats are one the most healthiest options available for your heart. Oats contain beta glucan, which is a soluble fibre that helps bring down cholesterol levels.

### **Whole grains**

Whole grains whether its wheat, barley, millet, pulses and even beans for that matter are good for the heart because they provide natural fibre and vitamin E, iron, magnesium and a host of anti-oxidants. Regular consumption of whole grains reduces blood pressure too.

### **Soy protein**

Soy is essentially soyabean curd. They are also available in the form of soya chunks and soya mince easily in the market today. Soy is an excellent healthy substitute for red meats which are high in fat, increase the bad cholesterol and saturated fats which are very bad for the heart.

### **Olive oil**

Olive oil is one of the most healthiest oils available, whose consumption is actually good for the heart. Having olive oil as a regular part of your diet, helps in lowering LDL (bad cholesterol) in the body. Also, olive oil contains monounsaturated fats that are good for the heart and are packed with anti-oxidants. Extra virgin olive oil contains polyphenols and gives even greater health benefits.

### **Tomatoes**

Tomatoes is a good source of vitamins and acts as a blood purifier. Regular consumption of tomatoes is known to reduce the risk of heart diseases. Vitamin K present in tomatoes helps to prevent occurrences of hemorrhages.