



Senior Health Line

August 2011



Niacin to Increase Good Cholesterol

Niacin is a B vitamin that is important for metabolizing carbohydrates into energy that your body can use. It also helps your body use fatty acids. A deficiency of niacin is rare, but can happen.

Pellagra is caused by a severe deficiency of niacin. Symptoms of pellagra include diarrhea, mental disorientation and skin problems.

Consuming excess amounts of niacin can cause your skin to flush, lead to rashes and damage your liver.

Most people get sufficient amounts of niacin from their diet and do not need to supplement. Foods high in protein are typically good sources of niacin. These would be poultry, fish, beef, peanut butter and legumes. Grains are often fortified with niacin and are a good source of this B vitamin.

Niacin has been found to raise the HDL or good cholesterol in the blood. The high density lipoproteins of HDL attach to the LDL or bad cholesterol and transports it to the liver to dispose of it. The higher your HDL cholesterol, the less bad cholesterol you may have

circulating through your blood. Niacin can raise HDL by 15-35%. It also works to lower triglyceride and LDL levels. High levels of triglycerides and LDL in the blood are risk factors for heart disease. Having a low HDL level itself is also a risk factor for developing heart disease. This means that even if your LDL, triglyceride levels and other risk factors are normal, having a low HDL increases your risk of developing heart disease.

Niacin may be given along with other medications such as statins to reduce high LDL and increase HDL. Check with your health care professional before taking niacin as a supplement.

High Temperatures Pose Health Risks



We have had record temperatures for several days. This can lead to serious health risks.

Medical authorities recommend:

- Staying hydrated by continuously sipping on fluids.
- Do not wait until you feel thirsty.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol as they can dehydrate you.

- Stay inside as much as possible. If you must be outside, try to stay in shaded areas and reduce activity.
- Monitor perspiration. If you stop sweating, drink more fluids immediately. This is a sign that your body is conserving fluids and is very dangerous.
- If you start to feel light-headed or dizzy, get into a cooler environment and ingest fluids. This is a sign that heat-related illness is imminent.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a cool shower or bath to cool down the body.

While anyone can be affected by heat-related illness, certain populations are far more at risk than others. This includes infants, people over the age of 65, those with diminished capacity and those who are physically ill. People with heart disease and high blood pressure are especially at risk. For these people, prevention is very important when it comes to heat-related illness.

Skillet Vegetable Sauté

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and sliced thin
- 1 cup eggplant, peeled and diced
- 2 green onions cut into ½ inch pieces
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ cup white grape juice
- ¼ cup tomato juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil over medium high heat in a large skillet. Add all vegetables except the

tomatoes. Cook until tender but still crisp, stirring frequently. Add tomatoes and continue cooking an additional 3 minutes. Combine juices and add to skillet. Simmer for 5 minutes. Season to taste and serve hot. Makes 4 servings.

Nutritional Value per serving:

- 130 calories
- 4 grams fat
- 21 grams carbohydrate
- 3 grams protein
- 4 grams fiber
- 50 milligrams sodium



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This newsletter has been partially funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact the Center for Civil Justice, 1-800-481-4989.

Oakland County, Funding provided by the Family Nutrition Program.