

The Lifestyle and Culinary Medicine Newsletter

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This Month's Focus: Heart Health

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, despite advances in treatment, accounting for nearly three in 10 deaths in 2023, according to a recent report by the American Heart Association.

You have the power to protect your heart; preventing habits are key to your heart health. It starts with understanding your risks and making healthy choices in your lifestyle, diet and physical activity.

This newsletter will provide a review of the risk factors and steps to a better heart health.

What's inside this issue:

**Steps to take for
heart health.**

**Recipe: Black eyed
Bean Salad.**



With care,
Dr Lateef

Risk Factors for Heart Disease:

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- excessive weight
- pre-diabetes and diabetes
- smoking
- family history in first degree relatives, age of 55 and older in females and 45 or more in males.

Some risk factors cannot be changed, like your age, sex, and a family history of early heart disease. Others are modifiable, for example, being more physically active and eating healthy. Start with simple and meaningful steps to lower your risk.

Steps for Heart Health:

Heart healthy diet: A dietary pattern of whole food plant-based diet is key to heart health. For example, Mediterranean dietary pattern has been studied extensively for heart health and has been proven to be the best. Studies have shown a decrease of 30% to 70% in major cardiovascular events, including heart attack and stroke.

A heart healthy diet is a combination of Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, nuts, seeds and olive oil.



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The more risk factors present, the higher your likelihood of developing heart disease.

Foods to avoid to improve heart health:

- Ultra-processed foods,
- Sugar sweetened beverages
- Foods high in sodium
- Saturated fats.

Saturated fat comes from animal sources such as butter, cheese, and fatty meats. They should make up less than 10% of your daily calories.

Steps for Heart Health:

Physical Activity and Strength Training.

- Aim for 30 minutes of strength and resistance training per week. Divide it in to 15 minutes of sessions on nonconsecutive days.
- Add 150 minutes per week of aerobic activity, like, walking, running or swimming.

Healthy Weight.

- Aim for a healthy weight (less than 25 BMI) and waist circumference (35 inches in women and 40 inches in men)
- Losing 5% to 10% of your weight can improve blood pressure, lower "bad" LDL cholesterol, and increase "good" HDL cholesterol and lower Apo-B (Apolipoprotein B are the number of LDL particles and is responsible for plaque buildup in arteries).



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Fitness is the Fuel for your Heart.



Stress Management.

- Managing chronic stress isn't about finding a "magic button" to turn it off; it's about building a toolkit to dampen the physical and mental noise.
- Since chronic stress keeps your body in a constant state of "fight or flight," the goal is to systematically signal to your nervous system that you are safe.
- When stress is chronic, your cortisol levels are likely stuck in high gear. You need to physically force your body back into the parasympathetic (rest and digest) state.

Few strategies to help with chronic stress.

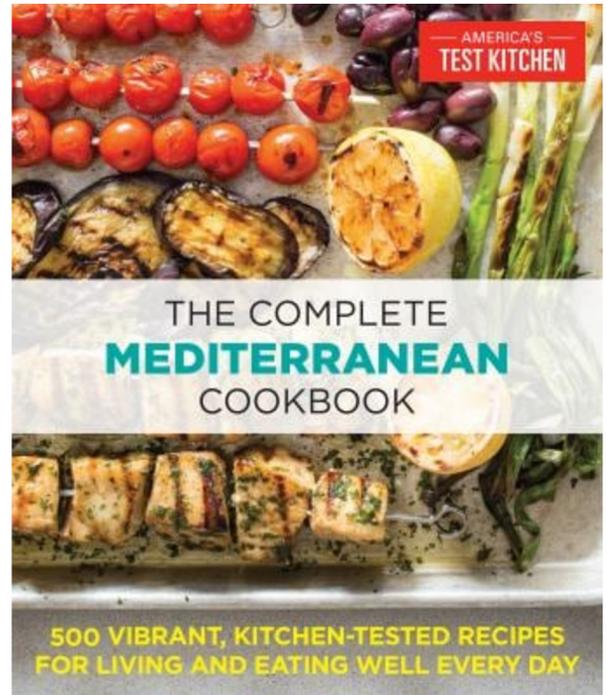
- **Box Breathing:** Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and hold for 4. This stimulates the vagus nerve and help you feel relaxed.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Tense and then release each muscle group from your toes to your forehead. It teaches your brain to recognize the difference between tension and ease.

Cook Book of the Month:

"The complete Mediterranean Cookbook"

By
America's Test kitchen

A comprehensive book that includes recipes from Italy, Greece, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon. These are easy to make fast recipes, and can be made on a week night from easy to find ingredients in your local supermarket. All recipes are followed by nutritional information to keep you informed on what exactly is in your food.



Black Eyed Bean Salad:



- 1 tbs EVOO
- 1 can black eyed beans
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp red chili powder
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 2-3 tbs fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 red onion sliced
- 1/2 half tomato diced
- 1/2 Serrano pepper, chopped
- 4 tbs fresh chopped cilantro

Add oil to pan, once heated add beans, sauté for 1 min and add all the spices, continue to sauté for another 2-3 min Add sliced onions, tomatoes and Serrano pepper, sauté 2 min and turn off the heat.

Add lemon juice and garnish with cilantro.

For extra flavor add dry mango powder (amchur powder) and use pomegranate molasses in place of lemon juice.