Nutritional Support to Help Lower Cholesterol and Maintain Healthy Cardiovascular System

By: Edward A. Lemmo, PhD.,R.D.

Cardiovascular disease has been the No. 1 killer in the United States since the turn of the century. Currently, more than 58.2 million Americans suffer from one form of heart disease or another. Older people are particularly at risk, with 14.2 percent of Americans over the age of 65 having ischemic heart disease (the condition in which blood flow to the heart is diminished).

The good news is that, like many chronic diseases, a person can do much to reduce his or her risk of cardiovascular disease. Although heredity plays a part, a sedentary lifestyle, poor diet, obesity, smoking and high stress levels are each significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease. People most at risk for developing arteriosclerosis often have some of the following characteristics: high blood pressure, increased low-density lipoproteins (LDL) bad cholesterol, decreased high-density lipoproteins (HDL) good cholesterol, smoke cigarettes, diabetic, obese, and a family history of the disease. A range of dietary supplements has been found to counter at least some of these risk factors.

While everyone is familiar with the command to keep your cholesterol levels low, few of us know what happens at the biochemical level to cause a rise in cholesterol. A fatty, wax-like substance, cholesterol is both manufactured by the body and derived from foods. While necessary in small amounts, a surplus of total cholesterol can accumulate in the blood and increase the risk of arteriosclerosis. Nutrition plays a key role in helping you keep your cholesterol levels low. Red Yeast Rice is a unique product which combines a synergistic blend of nutrients based on the most recent scientific findings to help consumers keep their cholesterol levels low.

Researchers have conducted studies that suggest isoflavones in soy are responsible for a cholesterol-lowering effect in the body. In a study, 156 patients with moderately elevated cholesterol levels were randomly assigned to receive a soy drink containing soy protein either with or without isoflavones. The isoflavone-containing soy drinks reduced both total cholesterol and LDL bad cholesterol. Overall, nearly 40 studies have demonstrated soy's ability to lower cholesterol.

Garlic is commonly thought to have effects, which might confer protection against heart disease. The ability of garlic to lower cholesterol has been extensively studied. The active component of garlic is the sulfur compound allicin which is considered to be responsible for much of garlic's activity including having a cholesterol-lowering effect.
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Guggul has primarily been used to lower serum cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Guggul contains resin, volatile oils, and gum. The extract isolates ketonic steroid compounds known as guggulsterones. These compounds have been shown to provide the lipid-lowering actions noted for guggul. Guggul significantly lowers serum triglycerides and cholesterol as well as LDL and VLDL cholesterol. At the same time, it raises levels of HDL cholesterol. Guggul has also been shown to reduce the stickiness of platelets another effect that lowers the risk of coronary artery disease.

Red rice yeast has been eaten in China for hundreds of years. This yeast makes a variety of chemicals which lower blood cholesterol. One of these chemicals is the same as the popular cholesterol-lowering drug sold under the brand name Mevacor. While amounts in the yeast are fairly low, they have been tested and shown to lower serum cholesterol in people and lab animals.

Lemon bioflavonoids are natural substances found in citrus foods. When taken in combination with the components of red rice yeast, this powerful antioxidant exerts favorable effects on the body’s immune system.

Chitosan is a naturally occurring substance that is chemically similar to the plant fiber called cellulose. Unlike plant fiber, however, chitosan is "magnetically" attracted to lipids and has the ability, acting like a "sponge", to significantly prevent fat in the digestive tract from being absorbed. Besides absorbing fat to promote weight loss, chitosan also inhibits bad cholesterol and boosts good cholesterol.

Niacin has a role in metabolizing fats and therefore is a potential treatment for high cholesterol levels. A benefit of niacin is its ability to lower triglyceride levels in the blood. It does this by increasing the activity level of lipoprotein lipase.

Summary

When combined, Red Rice Yeast, is a unique formulation offering a comprehensive approach to lowering cholesterol using natural ingredients. The combination of nutrients approaches the challenge of cholesterol...
RED YEAST RICE

- Monascus purpureus is derived from a strain of M. purpureus when yeast is prepared by a traditional rice fermentation method.
- Cholesterol reducing agent.
- Mechanism of action: HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor.
- Other active ingredients: proteins, unsaturated fatty acids, proteins, amino acids, saccharides, beta-sitosterol, campesterol, stigmasterol, isoflavone and its glycosides, saponin and sapogenin, and trace elements.

Hyperlipidemia is a well-known risk factor for arterio-vascular diseases, including coronary artery disease and cerebral vascular disease. People with hyperlipidemia are at risk for heart attacks and stroke. Therefore, it becomes beneficial to keep our cholesterol and triglycerides within a healthy range.

The "statin" drugs are among the most popular prescriptions that physicians are using to lower cholesterol. These drugs act as hepatic hydroxy-methyl-glucaryl coenzyme A (HMG-CoA) reductase inhibitors. Much of the cholesterol that adds to the high level of circulating cholesterol in the blood is manufactured in the liver utilizing the HMG-CoA reductase. Obviously, the red yeast rice mechanism of action is the same as in the "statin" drugs. Studies have shown the effectiveness of red yeast rice in reducing cholesterol, low density lipoproteins (LDL) and at the same time elevating the level of high density lipoproteins (HDL), thus making it a nearly ideal cholesterol reducing agent.

As always, people who are trying to lower their cholesterol should use supplements such as red yeast rice in conjunction with a healthy diet and exercise.

Other supplements which can be used in conjunction with this product are: Garlic, Hawthorn berry, Gugulipid, and Gamma Oryzanol (Rice Bran Oil).

DOSING: Levels as high as 400-800mg per kilogram per day have been used in studies.

NOTE: Products with this mechanism of action may decrease serum CoEnzyme Q10 levels. Supplementation with CoQ10 may be beneficial.

D. Paul Barney, M.D. © 1999

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REFERENCES:
