

Heart Health

Two weeks ago, I talked about basic nutritional supplementation that I recommend everyone take regularly for good nutritional support. This included a quality multi-vitamin, fish oil and a broad spectrum antioxidant. In this column, I would like to address some additional nutritional supplements that can help support good cardiovascular health.

For supporting good cardiovascular health, I once again recommend fish oil as well as folic acid, and CoQ10. I discussed fish oil last week, so I won't review that again here. Folic acid helps the body eliminate homocysteine. Homocysteine is a chemical that increases in the body when it is under stress. Homocysteine irritates the lining of the blood vessels and leads to inflammation. Inflammation in the blood vessels tends to cause the blood vessel walls to become sticky and attract cholesterol which then builds up and can clog the artery. Folic acid helps to protect this from happening.

CoQ10 is a substance that promotes normal muscle function. Both the heart and the walls of the arteries have muscles in them. CoQ10 is essential for these muscles to function properly.

While folic acid can be consumed in a normal diet, most Americans don't consume enough. Additionally, many Americans are under excessive stress and this depletes the available folic acid, which can cause a deficiency even if it is available in the foods that we eat. Consequently, it may be important for many of us to supplement folic acid.

CoQ10 is a substance that is created by the body. Some of us don't make enough and so supplementation may be beneficial. Furthermore, some medications, specifically many of the popular cholesterol lowering medications, can interfere with the normal production of CoQ10. Deficiency may result and this can lead to abnormal heart and artery muscle function.

Some of the more significant side-effects of cholesterol lowering medications is damage to the muscles in the body. It is speculated that the depletion of CoQ10 is the reason for this negative effect. Supplementing CoQ10 can help support normal muscle function throughout the body and reduce the chance of this adverse side effect.

In my next column I will discuss nutrients that may help protect individuals from osteoporosis and arthritis.