



# THE CO-OP *Produce* NEWSLETTER

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## *Taking Care of Your Heart in February*

February is the month of Valentine's Day, and thus a forever association in my mind between February and hearts. But instead of the red paper kind, I'm thinking about the big, beautiful organ inside of my body and how to support it. Last February a close family member of mine underwent heart surgery, and that motivated me to do some research on ways to support cardiovascular health through diet. In this issue, you'll find a list of dietary recommendations to support cardiovascular health. Please keep in mind that I'm not a doctor or a nutritionist, just a person who loves cooking and wanted more information to share with my family member and for myself. If you have heart disease, I recommend that you work with a professional nutritionist to get the most up to date and accurate information.

### **Dietary Recommendations for Supporting Cardiovascular Health**

**1** Eating a mostly plant-based, whole foods diet will put you on the right track. That means preparing and cooking the majority of your food from scratch. There are lots of great web-

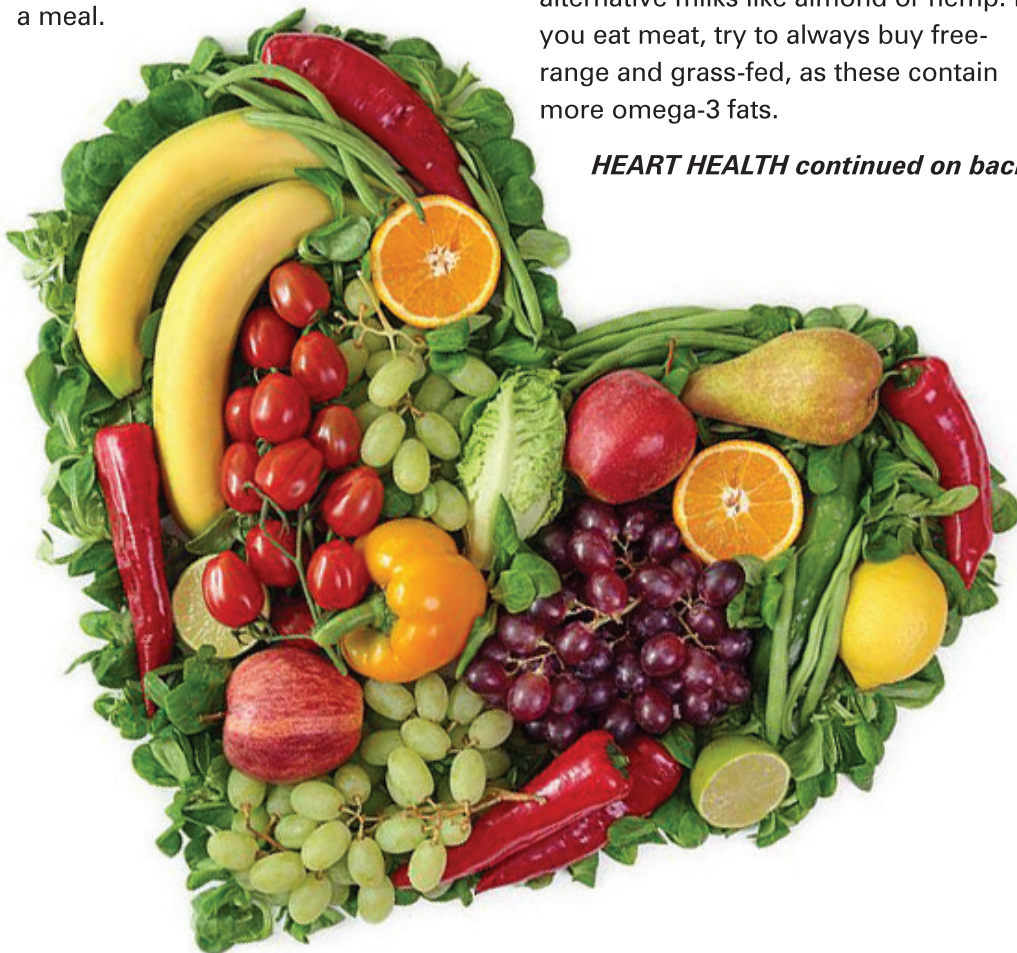
sites and cookbooks out there with simple, heart-healthy recipes to get you started.

**2** Eat lots of fiber! The recommendations I've seen range from 30-50 grams/day, which is a lot more than most Americans eat! If you are currently eating a lower fiber diet, you'll want to add more fiber gradually, as doing it all at once can sometimes cause bloating and cramping. Great sources of fiber include vegetables and fruits, beans, nuts, and small portions of whole grains (like ½ -1 cup of cooked grain at a meal).

**3** Eat healthy fats, and eat a limited amount of saturated fats (recommendations I've seen for patients with heart issues range from 12-15 grams of total saturated fat daily). Good sources of healthy fat include fish, tree nuts and their oils, seeds (such as flax and chia), avocados, olive oil, eggs in moderation (organic, omega-3 are best), seaweed, and dark chocolate.

**4** Eat organic lean protein, especially beans, seafood, soy (such as tempeh), plain non-fat yogurt, and unsweetened alternative milks like almond or hemp. If you eat meat, try to always buy free-range and grass-fed, as these contain more omega-3 fats.

*HEART HEALTH continued on back*



**5** Drink lots of healthy fluids, and be sure to limit caffeine intake and sugar in the drinks you consume. Unsweetened tea, especially green tea is great for your heart.

**6** Use spices and flavorful produce instead of excessive salt, fat, and sugar to season your food. Garlic, for example, is good for lowering your total cholesterol (and raising your HDL slightly), and it adds a great flavor to many dishes. Fresh herbs like cilantro and basil, and ginger and turmeric all impart wonderful flavors to food. Go to the spice section and open the jars and take a sniff! ■

## SPOTLIGHT ON: *Red Cabbage*

Red Cabbage adds depth of flavor and crunch to green salads, and it also provides a nice splash of eye-catching color. One of the things I love most about cabbage is how long it will stay fresh if you leave it whole and just slice off what you need. Has your lettuce gone bad and you need a topping for a sandwich or some tacos? Cabbage to the rescue! Cabbage is also very tasty sautéed in a pan with a little oil, garlic, and salt and pepper.

### Cardiovascular Support from Cabbage

“Recent studies on cabbage intake—especially studies on intake of red cabbage—have looked carefully at the potential for cardiovascular support from this vegetable. The results have been encouraging. Blood levels of beta-carotene, lutein, and total blood antioxidant capacity have been found to increase along with increasing intake of red cabbage intake. At the same time, total cholesterol, total LDL cholesterol, and total oxidized LDL have been found to decrease. Reductions in oxidized LDL are a particularly noteworthy finding since oxidized LDL is a known risk factor for development of atherosclerosis. One of the ways in which cabbage intake can lower your total and LDL cholesterol is through the process of binding with bile acids. Your liver uses cholesterol as a basic building block to produce bile acids. Bile acids are specialized molecules that aid in the digestion and absorption of fat, and when they are present in your digestive tract, fiber-related nutrients in cabbage can bind together with them for eventual excretion. Whenever this process takes place, your liver needs to replace the excreted bile acids by drawing upon your existing supply of cholesterol, and as a result, your cholesterol level drops down.” - From The World’s Healthiest Foods at [whfoods.com](http://whfoods.com) ■

*Happy Eating!*

*Erin, Olympia Food Co-op Produce Manager*



## RECIPE CORNER

### Coleslaw with Spicy Lime Vinaigrette

**6 cups cabbage (red, green or a mix), thinly sliced**  
**2 large carrots, grated**  
**3 green onions, thinly sliced**  
**1 large bunch cilantro, chopped**  
**Juice of 3 limes**  
**2 tablespoons agave**  
**3 tablespoons vinegar**  
**1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**  
**1/3 cup olive oil**  
**1/2 teaspoon salt**  
**a few squirts hot sauce**

Combine cabbage, carrots, green onions and cilantro in large bowl.

Make dressing by mixing together lime juice, agave, vinegar, mustard, oil, salt, and hot sauce. Mix dressing into cabbage mixture.

Season to taste with pepper and serve immediately, or chill for a few hours.