

BEDOK SOUTH SECONDARY SCHOOL  
FOOD & NUTRITION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Marks: \_\_\_\_\_/15

**With reference to the article below, answer the questions that follow.**

June 18, 2009 THE STRAITS TIMES 9

**MIND your BODY**

# Tonics for the heart

Diet and lifestyle modifications are best for promoting heart health, say experts.  
POON CHIAN HUI reports



Heart-friendly food includes fish – especially deep-sea fish such as salmon and sardine, which are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and which help reduce bad cholesterol.

**V**ital as the heart is, many of us do not shower it with enough care. One out of every three deaths in Singapore is caused by heart disease or stroke, says the Health Ministry.

While some people – such as those with a family history – are genetically predisposed to heart disease, many risk factors can be reduced with some effort, said Dr V P Nair, a cardiologist at Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

“To maintain a healthy heart, a balanced diet is very important to help in weight control,” said Dr Nair.

Abdominal fats are especially a hazard as fat deposits in the tummy area easily enter the blood, resulting in clogged blood vessels, he said.

Hence, cutting down on fatty food should be at the top of your healthy heart list, said Ms Jenny Goh, a senior nutritionist at Fitness and Health International.

In addition, one should avoid food that is high in salt, sugar and cholesterol.

Said Ms Goh: “Besides cutting down on these types of food, one’s diet should incorporate food that promotes heart health.”

Heart-friendly food contains fibre, phytochemicals and polyunsaturated fatty acids like omega-3 fatty acids.

Ms Goh recommends eating deep-sea fish such as salmon and sardine, which are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, twice a week.

A research team from Harvard Medical School found in 2003 that eating two servings of oily fish every week helps to cut down the risk of a heart attack.

Such food promotes healthy cholesterol levels by reducing bad cholesterol – known as low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol – that cause fat deposit accumulation on blood vessel walls. When a blood vessel is blocked, a stroke or heart attack may occur.

The other kind of cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, does the opposite – it absorbs excess cholesterol and takes it to the liver where it is broken down.

Unrefined carbohydrates like brown rice are also a good bet as they contain B vitamins. Niacin, or vitamin B3, is the only vitamin that can increase the levels of good cholesterol, said Dr Nair.

B vitamins also play a major role in lowering homocysteine levels. A British study in 2002 found that high levels of this amino acid increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The good news is, homocysteine levels can be lowered by consuming vitamins B1 and B12, as well as folic acid, said Dr Nair.

However, a good diet is not enough. Bad habits like smoking and drinking should be cut, while good ones, like exercising, should be maintained.

Dr Nair recommends exercising about five times a week, with each session lasting at least 30 minutes. Exercise helps one to destress. Stress may aggravate existing heart problems, he explained. “Diet and lifestyle modifications are the best tonics for a healthy heart,” he said.

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**1 in 3** deaths in Singapore is caused by heart disease or stroke

**Centrum** BALANCED FORMULA  
MULTIVITAMIN-MULTIMINERAL  
complete from A to Z

1. One out of three Singaporeans die of heart disease or coronary heart disease. Explain what is meant by coronary heart disease. [2]
2. From your understanding of the article, how does one achieve a balanced diet? [1]
3. Besides the advice of Ms Goh on cutting down on fatty food, what other 2 factors should one avoid. Suggest 2 examples of food-related that should be avoided. [3]
4. According to Ms Goh, one should incorporate food that promotes heart health. What three heart-friendly foods are beneficial? [3]
5. Suggest 2 tips on how one should choose fish. [2]
6. From the article, what does LDL and HDL do to the body? [2]
7. Besides a good diet, what other 2 methods should one follow to ensure a healthy living? [2]

~End~