Heart Health: Tomatoes and the Mediterranean Diet

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Introduction
What comes to mind when you think about heart health?

What is Heart Health?

Keeping it healthy means:

Blood pressure
Too high makes the heart have to work much harder

Cholesterol
A waxy substance your body needs, too much “bad” cholesterol can clog arteries

Blood sugar
Can damage connections to the heart

How do we Keep it Healthy?

Sodium

- You need some sodium - but we get too much
- Too much = high blood pressure and a stressed heart
- Most of the salt we eat is from processed & restaurant foods, not the salt shaker

Bonus: Sea, Himalayan, table, kosher – all salts are sodium

Mediterranean Diet

1

Origins

Inspired by the traditional eating habits of Greece, Italy, and Spain

2

What makes it special

Focuses on plants, olive oil, and fresh foods; linked to lower rates of disease, especially heart disease

3

Easy ways to start

Add more vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains; swap butter for olive oil

4

Practical exercise

Tomato bruschetta – Mediterrean flavor that is heart healthy too

Olive Oil

- High in oleic acid and antioxidants
- Extra virgin = highest grade, less processing
- Lower smoke point, still good for cooking
- Look for seal of approval, harvest date, and 100% extra virgin olive oil

Herbs and Spices

- **Good sources of antioxidants, vitamins, flavonoids, and minerals**

Garlic

Parsley

Basil

Mint

Oregano

Fennel

Why tomatoes are good for the heart

Lycopene

Antioxidant that protects blood vessels and lowers LDL

Vitamin C

Supports healthy arteries

Potassium

Helps lower blood pressure

Fiber

Helps cholesterol and blood sugar control

Thanks!

Questions?

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Learn More About Heart Health and the Mediterranean Diet

Medline Plus:
https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000110.htm

American Heart Association:
https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/mediterranean-diet

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/prevention/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/prevention.htm

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-healthy-living