



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HEART

A Guide to Simple Strategies
for Prevention and Protection

Nutrition Foundations

Eat the Rainbow (Polyphenols = Vascular Protection)

Why it matters:

- Polyphenols reduce oxidative stress
- Support endothelial function
- Improve nitric oxide signaling

Top picks:

- Berries
- Leafy greens
- Pomegranate
- Beets
- Extra virgin olive oil



Prioritize Anti-Inflammatory Fats

Why it matters:

- Reduce inflammation
- Improve triglycerides
- Support vascular flexibility

Include:

- Wild salmon, sardines
- Olive oil
- Walnuts
- Chia & flax



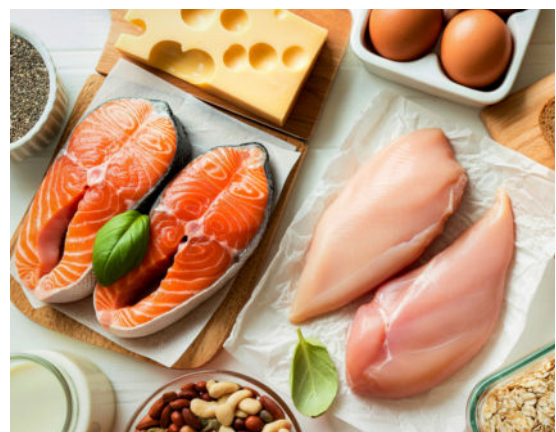
Protein for Muscle = Metabolic Protection

Why it matters:

- Preserves lean muscle
- Improves insulin sensitivity
- Reduces cardiovascular risk long-term

Limit

- Ultra-processed foods
- Refined sugars
- Industrial seed-oil heavy fast foods
- Chronic alcohol use



Targeted Supplements

Individualize based on labs...

Omega-3 (EPA/DHA)

- Lowers triglycerides
- Reduces inflammation
- Supports plaque stability

Magnesium (Glycinate or Taurate)

- Blood pressure support
- Improves vascular tone
- Reduces arrhythmia risk

Vitamin D (With K2 when appropriate)

- Modulates inflammation
- Supports vascular health

CoQ10

- Essential for mitochondrial energy
- Especially important if on statins

Fiber (Psyllium/PHGG)

- Improves LDL
- Supports microbiome
- Lowers cardiometabolic risk Promotes healthy digestion



Herbal & Botanical Support

Hawthorn (*Crataegus*)

- Improves coronary circulation
- Mild blood pressure support
- Traditional cardiac tonic

Garlic (*Allium sativum*)

- Supports healthy cholesterol
- Reduces platelet aggregation
- Antimicrobial and vascular benefits

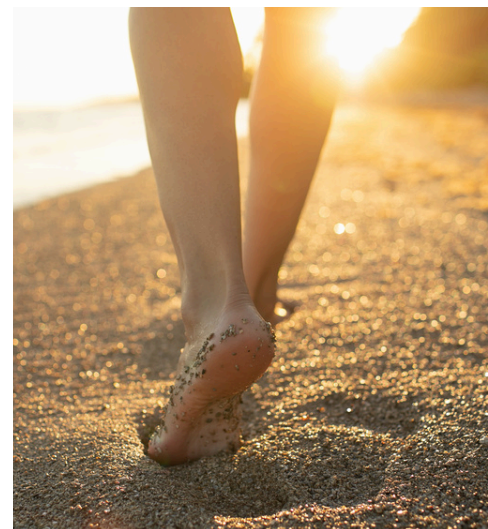
Berberine

- Improves insulin sensitivity
- Supports lipids
- Helpful in metabolic syndrome



Lifestyle

- Resistance training (3x/week minimum)
- Daily walking
- Prioritize sleep (7–9 hrs)
- Stress modulation (breathwork, nature, community)
- Sauna/heat exposure (when appropriate)
- Balanced nutrition (focus on whole foods and diverse nutrients)
- Mindful eating practices (e.g., eating slowly and savoring each bite)
- Hydration (aim for at least 8 cups of water a day)
- Regular health check-ups to monitor progress and adjust plans as needed
- Cultivating hobbies and interests that promote joy and relaxation



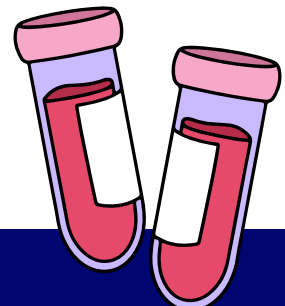
Functional Markers to Consider

Biomarker	Standard/Conventional	Functional/Optimal
ApoB	<130 mg/dL (general) <100 mg/dL (elevated risk)	<80 mg/dL ideally <70 mg/dL for low-risk individuals
Lp(a)	<75 nmol/L or <30 mg/dL	<30 nmol/L or <14 mg/dL (lower is always better – largely genetic)
hs-CRP	<3.0 mg/L (low cardiovascular risk)	<1.0 mg/L; ideally <0.5 mg/L
Fasting Insulin	2–25 µIU/mL (lab "normal")	<1.0 mg/L; ideally <0.5 mg/L
Triglyceride:HDL Ratio	<5 (general cutoff used by many labs)	<2.0; ideally <1.5 (a ratio >3 is a strong insulin resistance signal)
Homocysteine	5–15 µmol/L	6–9 µmol/L; above 10 warrants attention; above 12 is a concern
Omega-3 Index	>8% considered adequate by some guidelines	8–12%; below 4% is high risk; most Americans sit at 4–5%



Additional Markers Worth Including

Biomarker	Standard/Conventional	Functional/Optimal
Fasting Glucose	70–99 mg/dL	72–85 mg/dL
HbA1c	<5.7%	4.6–5.3%
Oxidized LDL (oxLDL)	Not routinely measured	<60 U/L; reflects actual atherogenic particle damage
GGT (Gamma-Glutamyl Transferase)	<55 U/L (men); <38 U/L (women)	<20 U/L – a sensitive early marker of oxidative stress and liver burden
Ferritin	12–300 ng/mL (men); 12–150 ng/mL (women)	40–100 ng/mL; elevated ferritin (>150 in women, >200 in men) is associated with cardiovascular and metabolic risk
Uric Acid	3.5–7.2 mg/dL (men); 2.6–6.0 mg/dL (women)	<5.5 mg/dL for men; <4.5 mg/dL for women – linked to insulin resistance and endothelial dysfunction



The Big Picture

Heart disease is rarely a cholesterol problem alone. It is a metabolic, inflammatory, and lifestyle-driven condition. Protecting your heart means protecting your muscle, supporting mitochondrial health, maintaining blood sugar stability, preserving vascular flexibility, and ensuring optimal nutrient status.

Your heart health is shaped by the small choices you make every day. By nourishing your body, staying active, managing stress, and monitoring key markers, you can build a strong foundation for lifelong cardiovascular wellness.

Protecting your heart doesn't require perfection — it requires consistency. Thoughtful daily habits that support metabolism, calm inflammation, and strengthen your body over time can make a profound difference. Embrace a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins to provide essential nutrients and antioxidants that fend off inflammation. Regular physical activity, whether it's a brisk walk, a yoga session, or a cycling adventure, keeps the heart muscle engaged and promotes circulation.

Mindful stress management, through practices like meditation, deep breathing, or simply enjoying a hobby, helps maintain a harmonious balance in your life. Don't overlook the importance of regular health check-ups; they provide valuable insights into your heart's condition, enabling timely adjustments to your lifestyle.

Remember, every small action contributes to your heart's story. Celebrate each step, and know that your commitment to heart health today plants seeds of vitality for the future.





Find resources and stay connected:
IMAhealth.org



Help make resources
like this possible.

Donate Today!

IMAhealth.org/donate

