

Fuel Your Heart: Keep The Beat Strong With L-Carnitine

by Wendy H. Weiss, MA, RD

(NAPSA)—The heartbeat is essential to life because it pumps blood rich with oxygen and nutrients throughout the body. Medical research is constantly looking at



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ways to keep the heart healthy and free from disease. Despite efforts, conditions like coronary heart disease and congestive heart failure continue

to affect nearly 18 million Americans. Nutrients in the food we eat are often investigated for possible preventive approaches to these cardiovascular conditions.

For the heart to function properly, it needs to get a supply of energy. The heart gets about 70 percent of its energy from the burning of fatty acids within our cells. L-Carnitine (el-car-nih-teen) is the nutrient that helps get these fatty acids into the cells to be burned for “fuel.” New research shows that L-Carnitine, when used in conjunction with traditional medicine, may give the heart some of the energy it needs to fight disease in several ways *and* over time.

For those people with exercise-induced angina (chest pain), L-Carnitine may help increase tolerance to exercise—also well-known to benefit heart health—by increasing the length of time people can exercise without chest pain hindering their progress.

L-Carnitine may also spare damaging effects to the heart muscle in the days and months following a heart attack. In a clinical study that looked at patients one year after a heart attack, those who had been given 4,000 milligrams (mg) of L-Carnitine per day for 12 months showed improvements in blood pressure and heart rate and reduced incidence of chest pain and mortality.

Benefits have also been shown in people who already have



Nutrition may fuel the heart with energy.

weakened hearts, such as those with congestive heart failure (CHF). CHF is a condition where the heart does not beat properly, and therefore can't effectively pump blood throughout the body. Clinical research indicates that supplemental L-Carnitine has beneficial effects in the hearts of people with CHF.

L-Carnitine is produced in the human body in small quantities (approximately 20 mg/day), but this amount is only 10 percent of the nutrient used daily by an average person, and only a fraction of the amount shown to benefit people with cardiac illness. L-Carnitine is available in food; two to three servings of lean meat such as lamb and beef can provide up to 300 mg of L-Carnitine. In order to reap the benefits of cardiac protection, however, supplemental L-Carnitine may be helpful. Before incorporating any changes into your health regimen, check with your physician.

For more information about L-Carnitine, visit the human nutrition center at www.carnitine.com.

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