

# HEART HEALTH

## Little-Known Molecule Plays Key Role In Cardiovascular Health

(NAPSA)—Here's a matter you may want to take to heart: a little-known molecule produced in blood vessels is actually an important part of overall heart health.

Nitric oxide, or NO, is a molecule that is produced in the endothelial cells, which line the inside of the arteries. It is produced by a form of a special protein called endothelial nitric oxide synthase (eNOS), and is responsible for the dilation of arteries that increase blood flow to all major organs. Studies show that young, healthy and athletic individuals produce more nitric oxide compared to people who are older, sedentary or consume diets high in saturated fats and low in fruits, vegetables and low-fat protein sources.

A leader in the field of nitric oxide research is Dr. Louis Ignarro, who received the 1998 Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine for his studies on nitric oxide. Dr. Ignarro and colleagues discovered that our own blood vessels can produce nitric oxide and that enhanced levels of nitric oxide can improve cardiovascular health.

More than 100,000 miles of blood vessels and arteries run throughout the body, and eNOS regulates the amounts of nitric oxide produced locally throughout the blood vessels to help them function normally. Since NO nourishes every organ and tissue with oxygen and nutrients, while also helping eliminate waste, it plays a

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key role as part of a healthy vascular system. Today's all-too-common "less-than-perfect lifestyle," coupled with aging, are all factors that can contribute to cardiovascular and other health problems.

Nitric oxide is continuously being studied for a more thorough understanding of its positive effects in the body. But surprisingly, a National Family Opinion poll conducted for Herbalife in May, 2003 found that, while 67 percent of respondents indicated they had heard of nitric oxide, less than one percent of Americans know what nitric oxide is and could identify it as an aid in healthy blood circulation. Twenty-four percent of respondents confused nitric oxide with laughing gas (nitrous oxide).

Dr. Ignarro, who also directs the Center for Vascular Biology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is committed to improving cardiovascular health and has spent the past several years translating his research into usable applications for consumers. "Nitric oxide is a very important messenger, or signaling agent in the body, in terms of providing cellular protection," said Dr. Ignarro, currently a professor of pharmacology at UCLA. "Researching

nitric oxide for the past 30 years and making the discovery that it is important for cardiovascular health is not the same as making this knowledge available to the public at large."

Exercise and certain foods help to increase the production of NO. But even with a regular exercise regimen, the body may not produce sufficient quantities of NO to maintain normal levels throughout the body. This is why dietary supplements that contain sufficient quantities of amino acids L-arginine and L-citrulline can help. Natural sources of L-arginine can include nuts, fruits, dairy and meats, while natural sources of L-citrulline can include melon rinds and cucumbers. However, it can be difficult to get as much of the amino acids only from natural food sources.

Dr. Ignarro's quest to bring the findings of his years of research to the general consumer led him to team with Herbalife, a weight management and nutrition company, to co-formulate Niteworks™, a new dietary supplement that contains key ingredients that help the body boost its own production of nitric oxide. Niteworks contains an amino acid complex including L-arginine and L-citrulline for NO production and an antioxidant package for NO protection.

For more information about Herbalife products visit [www.herbalife.com](http://www.herbalife.com) or contact a local Herbalife distributor.