



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women And Cholesterol—Make A Heart Healthy Start

(NAPSA)—Paying mind to heart health may help save women's lives. According to the American Heart Association, coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death among American women, yet less than one-tenth of women recognize heart disease as a major threat to their health.

The statistics on heart disease are particularly frustrating, given that it is often an avoidable condition, like its link to high-cholesterol. Many of the 100 million Americans believed to be on the borderline of the high cholesterol category could possibly improve their conditions with simple lifestyle changes and regular doctor visits. People diagnosed with high cholesterol are often placed on prescription statins but few know of effective over-the-counter options, such as natural sterol/stanol supplements.

Sterols and stanols are substances contained in plants that when ingested, keep LDL (or "bad") cholesterol from being absorbed by the body. They are naturally found in beans, nuts, rye, soy, vegetables, fruits and more—but only in trace amounts.

Sterol and stanol supplements can be a good option for those with borderline to high cholesterol. One such product is Nature Made's Cholest-Off, which has been clinically shown to lower cholesterol levels by up to 24 percent. Speaking with a doctor about various options like sterol/stanol supplements should be the first step in treating unhealthy cholesterol levels.

Here are a few quick references for heart health and cholesterol levels, as noted by the American Heart Association:

When to get checked

- Cholesterol levels should be checked regularly regardless of your weight, exercise habits and diet.



LOVE YOUR HEART—It's important for women to take steps to help their heart health.

- All women 20 years and older should have total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and triglycerides levels (fasting lipoprotein profile) checked once every five years and more frequently for women 55 years old and older.

- As a rule, women have higher HDL "good" cholesterol levels than men. The female sex hormone estrogen tends to raise HDL cholesterol but after menopause, the levels significantly drop.

What the numbers mean

- Total blood cholesterol will fall into one of these categories:

Desirable—Less than 200 mg/dL

Borderline high risk—200-239 mg/dL

High risk—240 mg/dL and over

Eat right and exercise

- To reduce cholesterol in your blood, eat foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol, lose weight if you need to and exercise 30-40 minutes on most days of the week.

For more information on heart health and how plant sterols and stanols work to lower cholesterol visit www.naturemade.com, or call toll free 1-800-276-2878.



Note to Editors: While this article may be particularly relevant around Mother's Day, it is evergreen and can be run throughout the year.