

♥ HEART HEALTH

You Are What You Eat: Choosing A Heart-Healthy Lifestyle

(NAPSA)—When it comes to good health, diet is right at the heart of the matter. By reducing the amount of fat and cholesterol you consume, it's possible to do a lot of good for your heart.

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease is America's number one killer. In addition, half of all Americans have high cholesterol levels (more than 200 mg/dL), which can lead to heart attack and stroke.

Factors such as age, gender and heredity can affect cholesterol levels but one factor people have control over is diet. Atlanta-based Registered Dietitian Rachel Agnew, accredited through the American Dietetic Association, suggests some heart-healthy diet tips to help keep cholesterol low:

- **Jump start your morning with breakfast**—Choose oat- or bran-based whole grains like oatmeal and add fresh fruit. Try to avoid refined grains, as they often lack nutrients.

- **For a lunch on the go, go healthy**—Today's fast-food chains are now offering healthier options like salads but be cautious of the dressings and fixings because they are often loaded with fat. An alternative is to bring your own dressing, ask if they have lowfat or ask for it on the side and use sparingly. Grilled options are always good, but again watch out for the dressings.

- **Keep your options open with fruits and vegetables**—Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables because they each contain different vitamins and nutrients. By limiting your intake of certain fruits and vegetables, you may be alienating important nutrients.



A proper diet is essential for overall heart health.

- **Super-size your sterols and stanols**—These nutrients are found naturally in various legumes, dark leafy greens, fruits and more. Simply put, they act as sponges to help carry LDL "bad" cholesterol out of the body. Unfortunately, the body needs about one gram of sterols/stanols to lower cholesterol levels and only trace amounts are found in food. The good news is that they can be found in concentrated forms; one example is a supplement made by Nature Made called Cholest-Off.

- **There's plenty of fish in the sea...for dinner**—The American Heart Association recently recommended people with heart disease eat at least two three-ounce servings of fish a week, which can include: salmon, herring, tuna and mackerel. Pair this with asparagus and whole grain rice for a complete meal.

By eating right, getting cholesterol checked, consulting a physician and exercising regularly, people can take simple steps in keeping their hearts healthy. For more information on cholesterol and plant sterol/stanol supplementation call 1-800-276-2878 or visit www.NatureMade.com.