

top 10

Top 10 Foods to Keep Your Arteries Clean

Arteries are blood vessels that transport oxygen and nutrients from your heart to the rest of your body. In order for this important process to occur, your arteries should be flexible, strong, elastic and clear of any deposits.

As we age, deposits of fatty substances, cholesterol, cellular waste products, calcium and other substances can build up in your arteries. We want arteries that are flexible, strong, elastic and clear of any deposits. Plaque restricts blood flow, and can even cause arteries to rupture, leading to blood clots, which in turn can lead to a heart attack or stroke. The buildup of plaque in the arteries, called atherosclerosis, is the underlying cause of heart disease.

Exercising, healthy foods, and smart supplementation is an excellent way to keep your arteries healthy. Vitamins D and K are important for strong bones and teeth and a healthy immune system, but did you also know that this pair is essential to arterial health? Vitamin D is essential for absorbing calcium while Vitamin K helps your body better utilize Calcium and keep it out of the arterial walls and protect our arterial elasticity.

Here are ten foods that are especially adept at helping to keep your arteries clean:



1. **Grapefruit:** Grapefruit contains a type of fiber called pectin, which has been shown in animal studies to slow down the progression of atherosclerosis.



2. **Green Tea:** Green tea is a healthy beverage containing procyanidins, which have been found to help prevent blood clots and promote healthy endothelium (the tissues that lines blood vessels and your heart).



3. **Apples:** Apples (particularly Red Delicious and Granny Smith) are also rich in procyanidins.



4. **Garbanzo beans:** Garbanzo beans contain both soluble and insoluble dietary fiber, which help to remove cholesterol-containing bile from your body. They are also known to help prevent heart disease.



5. **Olive oil:** Using olive oil as your exclusive source of oil may cut your risk of coronary heart disease almost in half, according to the CARDIO2000 case-control study, published in Clinical Cardiology. Meanwhile, studies show that particles of LDL (bad) cholesterol that contain monounsaturated fats (found in olive oil) are less likely to become oxidized. This is important because only oxidized cholesterol is able to stick to your artery walls and form plaques.



6. **Spinach:** Spinach is a leafy green that contains both vitamin C and vitamin A, which team up to prevent cholesterol from becoming oxidized (and thereby helping to prevent plaques from forming in your arteries).



7. **Salmon:** Salmon is rich in omega-3 fats, which make blood less likely to clot inside arteries and prevent cholesterol from becoming damaged or oxidized. Choose wild-caught salmon (instead of farm-raised) for the most benefits.



8. **Tomatoes:** Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, an antioxidant that may make LDL cholesterol much less susceptible to becoming oxidized - again, this is the first step in the formation of plaque formation and is a major risk factor for heart disease.



9. **Swiss Chard:** Swiss chard is an excellent source of the antioxidant vitamin E, which helps prevent free radicals from oxidizing cholesterol. Eating a diet rich in vitamin E has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of developing atherosclerosis.



10. **Garlic:** Garlic helps your heart and arteries in numerous ways including:

- Stimulating the production of nitric oxide in the lining of blood vessels, which may help them to relax
- Inhibiting coronary artery calcification, which serves as a marker for plaque formation
- Preventing the oxidation of cholesterol
- Reducing the formation of nanoplaque (the first building blocks of plaque) by up to 40% and reducing the size of the nanoplaque that has already formed by up to 20%.