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Healthy diet, healthy heart

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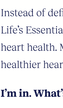
Welcome to Issue 12 of Science Says! Our weekly newsletter where you'll learn the latest healthy aging and C15:0 research news that our team of doctors, scientists, and experts are most excited about—without having to go search for it.

Eric and Steph
Co-Founders, Doctors, Nerds



What Dr. Eric Venn-Watson, our co-founder and Navy physician, is reading.

HEALTHY AGING

Heart health for all ages

A couple of newsletters ago, we talked about how science and medicine are increasingly expanding beyond the role of reactively treating disease to proactively promoting health. As part of that expansion, the American Heart Association recently published eight health tips in the journal, Circulation. We are dedicating the next round of newsletters to Life's Essential 8.

What is Life's Essential 8?

Instead of defining whether or not you have heart disease, Life's Essential 8 is used to define whether or not you have heart health. Meeting these essential 8 goals can help us have healthier hearts and enable us to live longer, healthier lives.

I'm in. What's on my heart health to-do list?

- [x] Healthy diet
- [ ] Participation in physical activity
- [ ] Avoidance of nicotine
- [ ] Healthy sleep
- [ ] Healthy weight
- [ ] Healthy levels of blood lipids, blood glucose, and blood pressure

While this list may sound redundant, there is a reason. All of the steps above can help us live longer, healthier lives - and less than 1% of individuals meet all eight of the steps above. That means 99% of us have something real we can do.

Just as importantly, the definitions of these tips have been evolving. This week, let's start with an updated take on "healthy diet".

A new approach to a healthy diet

The Mediterranean diet has been shown to improve our overall health, but it is pretty difficult to just say, "Start eating as if you lived in Greece." Because of this, a new way to score our individual diets is being recommended. It is called the Mediterranean Eating Pattern for Americans (aka, MEPA).

What is your MEPA Score?

Take out you pen, and give yourself 1 point for each of the following healthy diet criteria that you meet:

- [ ] ≥ 2 servings of olive oil per day
- [ ] ≥ 7 servings of green leafy vegetables per week
- [ ] ≥ 2 servings of other vegetables per day
- [ ] ≥ 2 servings of berries per week
- [ ] ≥ 1 serving of other fruit per day
- [ ] ≤ 3 servings of red meat, hamburger, bacon or sausage per week
- [ ] ≥ 1 serving of fish per week
- [ ] ≤ 5 servings of chicken per week
- [ ] ≤ 4 servings of full fat or regular cheese or cream cheese per week
- [ ] ≤ 5 servings of butter or cream per week
- [ ] ≥ 3 servings of beans per week
- [ ] ≥ 3 servings of whole grains per day
- [ ] ≤ 4 servings of commercial sweets, candy bars, pastries, cookies or cakes per week
- [ ] ≥ 4 servings of nuts per week
- [ ] ≤ 1 meal at a fast food restaurant per week
- [ ] >0 or ≤ 2 servings of alcohol per day for men and >0 or ≤ 1 servings of alcohol per day for women

Okay, now add up your points. If you had 12 points more, congratulations! You meet the MEPA criteria of a healthy diet. If you were under 12 points, check off one or two new habits that you can try to add into your new healthy diet routine.

Stay tuned for next week's newsletter on the latest scientific studies around exercise recommendations!

C15:0 in your diet

Did you know that dozens of peer-reviewed studies have linked C15:0 to better heart health?* C15:0's heart health benefits are likely due to it's role as an activator of key receptors, including PPARs and AMPK. Additionally, fatty15 has been shown to directly protect our blood vessels by decreasing proinflammatory cytokines.

Since C15:0 is primarily found in whole fat dairy products (which contain much higher amounts of 'bad' even-chain saturated fats), you may be wondering how to best get your daily amount of heart-healthy C15:0.

We wondered the same thing! The result? Five years of work later, we developed the > 99% pure powder, vegan-friendly C15:0 ingredient (aka FA15) in fatty15.

Here's to your heart health!

Dive deeper into the science

READ THESE STUDIES

- Life's Essential 8: Updated tips from the American Heart Association
- MEPA Score for Healthy Diets
- Higher C15:0 linked to better heart health
- C15:0 as an essential fatty acid