HeartCaringNews

"EAT FOOD. NOT TOO MUCH. MOSTLY PLANTS."

If ever there was a simple approach to eating a sensible, heart-healthy diet, this is it, thanks to food journalist Michael Pollan. Pollan is the author of *Food Rules*, a list of 64 easy-to-understand rules for eating.

Although it sounds overly simplistic, Pollan's number one rule is based on sound science that eating a primarily plant-based diet reduces your risk of developing serious illnesses. Plants are full of vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, carbohydrates, proteins and phytochemicals (beneficial compounds in plants). Together, they help keep your body — and your heart — healthy.

Vegetarian diets are generally lower in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol, according to the American Heart Association. People who eat mostly plants seem to have lower risks of obesity, cardiovascular heart disease, high blood pressure and even some forms of cancer. In fact, a plant-based diet may be (at least partially) the answer to many of these health problems. According to a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, "substantial evidence indicates that plant-based diets including whole grains as the main form of carbohydrate, unsaturated fats as the predominate form of dietary fat, an abundance of fruit and vegetables, and adequate [omega-3] fatty acids can play an important role in preventing [cardiovascular disease]."

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Date & Cashew Truffles

Makes 36 balls

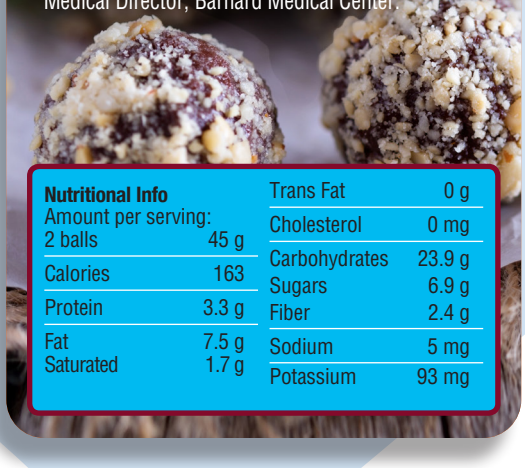
Ingredients

2 cups raw cashews
1½ cups soft Medjool dates, pitted (If dates are hard, soak in hot water until soft.)
¼ cup unsweetened almond milk
¼ cup shredded, unsweetened coconut

Preparation

1. Process the cashews in a food processor until finely ground. Reserve ½ cup.
2. Add dates and process until well blended. Add small amounts of almond milk if needed until ingredients hold together.
3. Roll the mixture in your palms to make 1-inch balls.
4. Combine reserved cashews and coconut, and roll balls in mixture to coat.

Recipe courtesy of James F. Loomis, MD, MBA, Medical Director, Barnard Medical Center.



Nutritional Info

Amount per serving: 2 balls	45 g		
Calories	163	Trans Fat	0 g
Protein	3.3 g	Cholesterol	0 mg
Fat	7.5 g	Carbohydrates	23.9 g
Saturated	1.7 g	Sugars	6.9 g
		Fiber	2.4 g
		Sodium	5 mg
		Potassium	93 mg

DO YOU HAVE DIABETES? BE AWARE OF P.A.D.

Heart disease and stroke are the number one causes of death and disability among people with type 2 diabetes. If you have diabetes, you should be aware of one of the potential complications: peripheral artery disease (P.A.D.).

Peripheral artery disease

When you have P.A.D., fatty deposits block or narrow blood vessels in your legs. This restricts blood flow to your feet and legs and raises your risk for a stroke or heart attack. The risk of P.A.D. increases with age and affects more women than men. Approximately one-third of people 50 and older who have diabetes also have P.A.D., according to the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Although there are several diagnostic tests for P.A.D., the most common is the ankle-brachial Index (ABI). The ABI compares the blood pressure in your ankle to the blood pressure in your arm. An ABI of 1.0 to 1.4 is generally considered normal.

Should you be screened for P.A.D.?

The ADA recommends ABI screening in people 50 and older who have diabetes or people younger than 50 who have risk factors for P.A.D. Risk factors mirror those for other types of heart disease: smoking, high blood pressure or cholesterol, being overweight, lack of physical activity and a family or personal history of heart disease.

Because P.A.D. has few symptoms, it tends to be underdiagnosed and undertreated. Talk to your physician if you have risk factors for P.A.D. or experience symptoms, including mild leg pain, trouble walking, or numbness, tingling or coldness in your lower legs or feet. P.A.D. treatment includes medications and supervised exercise therapy.

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Worried about getting enough protein? No need. You can obtain sufficient nutrition, including protein, from plants. The key is to eat a wide variety of plant foods, including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes (peas and beans), seeds, soy and plant-based oils, especially olive oil. Not only are plants packed with essential nutrients, they are also rich in fiber, which promotes digestive health. Eating plant foods will leave you feeling full, so you'll eat less. This is a bonus if you are trying to lose weight.

You don't have to become a full-fledged vegetarian or vegan (someone who consumes no animal products). Try simply adding more plant-based foods into your diet. Eliminate meat from meals once or twice per week. Replace it with vegetarian protein sources, such as soy or quinoa (keen-wah), a whole grain that contains all the essential amino acids (building blocks of protein). Make sure you get enough omega-3 fatty acids by eating cold-water fish (such as salmon), flaxseeds, walnuts and soybeans, or take a high-quality omega-3 supplement.

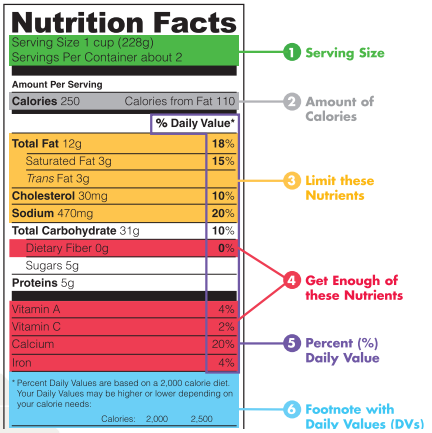
Remember: The key to a heart-healthy diet is to "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."

HeartFact:

A woman's average heartbeat is FASTER than a man's by almost 8 beats a minute.

THE FDA BANS THE TRANS

Good news for your heart: In the near future, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will ban trans fats, a common ingredient in many commercially produced food products. Trans fats are associated with raising LDL ("bad") cholesterol, lowering HDL ("good") cholesterol and increasing your risk of developing heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.



The purpose of trans fats is to extend the shelf life of food and improve taste and texture of prepackaged snacks, baked goods and stick margarine. Manufacturers make trans fats by adding hydrogen to vegetable oil (called hydrogenation), which converts liquid fats to solids at room temperature.

Research clearly shows that trans fats are not healthy. In fact, in 2008, California became the first state to ban restaurant chains from using trans fats for cooking or frying.

You don't have to wait to ban the trans from YOUR diet. Here are a few ways to reduce, or eliminate, these unhealthy fats.

- Limit your consumption of prepackaged foods. They are often made with hydrogenated oils.
- Eat primarily whole, unprocessed foods, such as whole grains, beans, peas, fruits and vegetables.
- Cook with naturally occurring vegetable oils. Canola, sunflower, safflower and olive oil are all good choices.
- Bake, steam, grill or broil foods instead of frying.
- Read food labels and be alert for partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list.

Your best bet is to limit calories from fat to less than one-third of total calories to reduce your risk of developing chronic diseases. If you have high LDL cholesterol, the American Heart Association recommends limiting trans and saturated fats to five to six percent of total calories.

CONSUMER PRODUCT REVIEW: GOT MEDS?

If you take prescription drugs, you are not alone. Between 2009 and 2012, almost half of the U.S. population took at least one prescription drug during the previous 30 days. One in five took three or more, and 11 percent took five or more, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That's a lot of medications to keep track of!

Fortunately, there are numerous apps to help you remember to take prescription drugs, vitamins or over-the-counter medications. Best of all: these reminders are free and easy to use!

For iPhone CardioSmart Med Reminder, by Drugs.com — Functions as a personal medication record, recommended by the American College of Cardiology

MedCoach Medication Reminder, by GreatCall, Inc. — Also connects to your pharmacy to refill prescriptions

For Android Med Helper Pill Reminder, by EarthFlare — Notifies you when you're running low or medications are about to expire

For iPhone and Android Medisafe Meds & Pill Reminder, by Medisafe — Leading medications manager on the iTunes App Store

Dosecast — Medication Reminder, by Montuno Software, LLC — Performs live sync between devices

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