

The ONE food you should avoid



The one food you should avoid

Q: Working with a cardiologist in a hospital, I asked him is there one food to avoid above all others. He answered yes, cheese.

Is the doctor correct?

A: I would disagree with the cardiologist. I think the one food to avoid above all others is sugar—in all its forms.

The cardiologist chose cheese as the food to avoid because of

its fat and cholesterol content. But fat and cholesterol in a food does not translate to fat and cholesterol in the body upon eating it. Dietary cholesterol doesn't significantly increase cholesterol levels. The liver churns out 80 percent of the cholesterol your body needs because it is critical to life. The phospholipid cell membrane in all your cells is composed of cholesterol. The brain is composed of at least 40 percent cholesterol. Cholesterol is the substrate from which other hormones are synthesized. As you can see, cholesterol is a necessary substance. *That's why the liver produces most of it.*

The natural fats in foods like cheese can help raise HDL cholesterol – the so-called good stuff. Dairy fat also contains trans-vaccenic acid, the precursor to conjugated-linoleic acid (CLA), a potent preventer of cancer.

Sugar, on the other hand, raises triglycerides—an independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Very high triglycerides can suppress HDL and cause small dense, atherogenic LDL particles. Sugar also increases insulin levels by way of raising blood sugar, which propagates inflammation and can raise blood pressure by causing sodium retention.

Sugar is an anti-nutrient that depletes your vitamin B stores and magnesium needed for metabolism and heart health. Depletion of B vitamins may cause homocysteine levels to increase. High homocysteine is an independent risk factor for heart disease and stroke, not to mention dementia and bone fracture.

Eating natural full-fat cheese in the context of a low carb diet isn't dangerous.

Eating sugar is.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN

Email your questions to RadioProgram@aol.com.