How to Lower Cholesterol with Herbs and Spices Transcript

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Updating the Daily Dozen Spices for Cholesterol

How to Lower Cholesterol with Herbs and Spices In our last video, I talked about modifying the Daily Dozen to make it as cholesterol-lowering as possible.

How might we tweak the spices entry? It already starts with a quarter teaspoon of turmeric. Amla, dried Indian gooseberry, may decrease LDL cholesterol by 25 points in 12 weeks.

Amla and Sumac for LDL Reduction

Now, this was using an amla extract, which might equal about a half teaspoon of amla powder a day. Straight amla powder has also been tried. A third of a teaspoon a day may decrease LDL as much as 30 points or more in both people with diabetes and without.

So, let's add amla to the list. The spice sumac is another powdered berry. One or two grams a day can lower LDL by around nine points. The smallest effective dose would be about a half teaspoon a day, which is enough to significantly boost the efficacy of a statin drug by 11 points.

Nigella Seeds and Garlic Powder

Note that sumac is in the cashew and mango family; so, if you have an allergy to those, you may be allergic to sumac. But if not, you can add that too.

Dozens of randomized controlled trials involving thousands of participants found significant cholesterol benefits with nigella seeds, also known as black cumin seeds, with whole powdered seeds more effective than just extracted black seed oil, and one study suggesting that whole unground seeds are also better than the powder.

Fenugreek, Lemon Balm, and Savory

The smallest effective dose is 500 mg, which is only about a quarter teaspoon a day of unground seeds or just a pinch of ground black cumin, about a tenth of a teaspoon.

Garlic powder can work at an even smaller dose, just 300 mg, which comes out to be about a tenth of a teaspoon of garlic powder or a quarter of a clove of fresh garlic.

Powdered fenugreek can be considered a cholesterol-lowering medicinal plant, but the doses researchers used were huge. The lowest effective dose I could find of the whole spice used five grams four times a day, which is like five teaspoons of fenugreek powder— way more than culinary doses, which makes me concerned about long-term safety.

The reason I mention this is because the benefit was extraordinary, a drop in LDL of more than 100 points compared to control. I don't think I've ever seen a food do anything like that, reducing LDL by more than 50%.

Hopefully, we'll see future studies with more moderate doses. The herb lemon balm can lower LDL at a dose of three grams a day, dropping LDL by 13 points over placebo; however, just drinking lemon balm tea does not appear to help.

Also, possibly unsafe during pregnancy, but otherwise, a teaspoon a day may help. This is getting to be quite a list. The herb savory, also known as summer savory, may be even more potent, with a third of a teaspoon reducing LDL by as much as 27 points over placebo.

Wrapping Up the Spice Strategy

So, let's definitely add that as well. Obviously, you can just pick and choose whichever you enjoy, but if the goal is to get our LDL as low as possible using every possible safe, simple solution, how might we easily, conveniently get as many of these as possible?

That's exactly what Dr. Greger will cover in the final video of this series, next.