Heart Healthy Nutrients, Foods and Their Benefits

Phytoestrogens: **Flax Seed, Soy Beans, Tofu Phytoestrogens** are substances in plants (like flaxseed) that have a weak estrogen-like action in the body. Studies suggest that they lower the risk of blood clots, stroke, and cardiac arrhythmias. It may also help lower total and LDL "bad" cholesterol and triglycerides, and even blood pressure.

Phytosterols: **Rice Bran, Corn, Wheat Germ, Nuts, and Seeds Phytosterols** are plant sterols that chemically resemble cholesterol -- and seem to reduce blood cholesterol.

Cartenoids: **Sweet Potatoes, Red Bell Peppers, Carrots, Cantaloupe, Papaya, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Romaine Lettuce** **Carotenoids** are heart-protective antioxidants in many colorful fruits and veggies. Alpha-carotene, beta-carotene, lutein, and lycopene are carotenoids.

Polyphenols: **Berries, Red Wine, Dark Chocolate, Green and White Teas, Extra Virgin Olive Oil** **Polyphenols** are another set of antioxidants that protect blood vessels, lower blood pressure, reduce LDL "bad" cholesterol.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Alfa-Linolenic Fatty Acids: **Salmon, Tuna, Flax Seed, Almonds, Walnuts**

**Omega-3 fatty acids** and **alpha-linolenic fatty acids** help boost the immune system, reduce blood clots, and protect against heart attacks. They also increase good HDL levels, lower triglyceride levels, protect arteries from plaque buildup, are anti-inflammatories, and lower blood pressure.

B-Complex Vitamins: **Black Beans, Soy Beans, Spinach, Chicken Breast, Yellow Fin Tuna, Dairy Products** **Vitamin B-12 (folate)** and **vitamin B-6** -- protect against blood clots and atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. **Niacin (vitamin B-3)** helps increase HDL "good" cholesterol.

Vitamin C and E, Magnesium, Potassium, and Calcium: **Oranges, Wheat Germ, Red Bell Peppers, Lima Beans, Plantains, Papayas, Spinach** **Vitamins C and E** are antioxidants that protect cells from free radical damage. **Magnesium, potassium, and calcium** help lower blood pressure. **Fiber**-rich foods help lower cholesterol levels.

