

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Much as we Americans try, our bodies keep refusing to allow us to just pop pills to stay healthy. Several years ago there was lots of excitement over the potential of Vitamin E and aspirin to protect us against heart disease, cancer and stroke. Some doctors, some health newsletters, lots of popular media sources were recommending that we should all be taking an aspirin a day to prevent heart attacks and strokes. There were lots of recommendations to take Vitamin E capsules every day to prevent heart attacks, strokes and cancer.

The Vitamin E promises seemed based on pretty good evidence. After all, it is known to be a good antioxidant. That is, it protects our cells from breaking down due to too much oxygen or oxidation of the fats. Since damage to the inside of our arteries seems to make it easier for the cholesterol and plaque to build up and cause the stroke or heart attack, preventing that damage might protect us. Since some cancers seem to get started because of oxidation damage to the genes, preventing that might protect us.

But once again, while fruits, vegetables and whole grains that contain Vitamin E are part of a healthy, protective diet, supplements of Vitamin E have not lived up to their promise, at least in middle-aged women.

The National Institute of Health has just published the results of following almost 40,000 women for 10 years. The women were all 45 years or older when they started. Some received a supplement of 600 mg of Vitamin E, some received low-dose aspirin, some received a placebo. The placebo was just to make sure that no one could tell

which they were taking. They were not instructed to make any other changes in their diets, exercise or lifestyles.

Last March the NIH announced that the aspirin did nothing to help prevent the women from having a first heart attack. Women with or without aspirin died at about the same numbers during the study.

Now the numbers are out on the vitamin part of the study. Vitamin E capsules did nothing to lower the total number of cancers the women got. Even the most common cancers in women, those of the breast, lung or colon, were not affected. Women taking the supplements had almost the same number of heart attacks and strokes as the women not taking them. Almost the same number of women died in each group during the 12 years of the study.

So, once again, we are faced with the unpleasant results that we can't eat everything we like, sit in front of a computer or TV all day, and just take a pill or two to save ourselves from the results. If we want to enjoy heart health into old age, we need to pay attention to what we eat and how we live. Lots of fruits and vegetables, enough whole grains and low fat dairy products, some protein, that's a healthy diet. Stick to healthy oils like olive and canola, avoid empty calorie sweets and high-fat meats. It's not really that hard to get used to, honest!

And no matter how you're eating, keep active. Walk, swim, bike. When you're watching TV, lift cans of soup or bottles of water during the commercials to increase your exercise levels. It all helps!

Here's a recipe from the Fresh from Florida folks. Cabbage is one of those cruciferous vegetables that has lots of fiber and natural antioxidants, and the short cooking time will preserve some of its healthy vitamin C as well. Choose low fat and

low sodium turkey and cheese for extra benefits. If you prefer less spice, use a plain cheese instead of the jalapeño. Enjoy!

Steamed Cabbage Wraps

4 Florida cabbage leaves	4 slices deli turkey, sliced thin
1/4 Florida onion, thinly sliced	½ Florida tomato, thinly sliced
4 slices jalapeño cheese	

Cut the ribs out of the cabbage leaves. Place each leaf between two damp paper towels, and steam in the microwave for 30 seconds. On each leaf, place a slice of turkey, a slice of onion, a slice of tomato, and a slice of cheese. Roll up. Place filled leaves in a dish and microwave for 20 seconds. Serve hot. Serves 2.

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