

Plant Sterols

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What are plant sterols?

Plant sterols are naturally occurring parts of all plants. They have been shown to lower cholesterol levels by up to 14%, depending on how much is consumed. They work by blocking the absorption of cholesterol, leading to reduced levels of cholesterol in the blood. Beginning in 2001 the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute recommended that people with elevated blood cholesterol levels add foods fortified with sterols and plant stanols to help cut their LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels.

How much is need to lower blood cholesterol levels?

Studies have shown that an intake of 2 grams per day is needed to have an effect on blood cholesterol levels. It is difficult to obtain this amount from natural foods alone. Many healthy foods contain naturally occurring stanols and sterols: corn, sunflower, safflower, soybean and olive oils, almonds, beans, wheat, lettuce, bananas, apples and tomatoes. The problem is that it takes a large amount of these foods to match the amount in fortified products. For example, you’d have to eat about 13 cups of almonds (about 7,000 calories) to reach the recommended 2 grams per day.

Where Can I Get Plant Sterols:

Most of the products listed can be found at your local grocery store. If you can’t find a product, look at www.corowise.com/wheretobuy and you can see how to order the products on line. Make sure the product you buy has plant sterols in it, since there are similar products (i.e. Lifetime cheese has several varieties, but only one with plant sterols). You can also look at the attached list from Prevention magazine and go to www.prevention.com/heartsmartfoods/?...Heart%20Smart%20Foods%20 for more information on each product and where to buy

Who Should Use Plant Sterols:

People at risk of heart disease, especially those with high blood cholesterol levels can benefit from using these products. These products are not meant to replace cholesterol-lowering medication. Research shows that plant sterols work together with cholesterol-lowering medications to lower blood cholesterol levels even further.



Points to Consider:

- The dosage is 2-3 grams or 2,000-3,000 mg per day.
- The foods in which the plant sterols are found DO contain calories and fat. Use the light spreads and be sure to account for the fat and calories.
- These spreads can be used like ordinary margarines on bread, for baking and for cooking.

Supplements that have plant sterols:

- Metagenics Protein Shake: 2 grams plant sterols in each serving (see Susan Buckley, RD)
- Nature Made Cholest Off (6 tabs)– Walgreens, WalMart, King Soopers
- ModuChol (4 tabs) – Vitamin Cottage, Whole Foods, Sunflower Market
- Centrum Cardio – Multivitamin (2 tablets) contains 800 mg
- Cardio Chews – 2 chews have 800 mg. Order at drugstore.com
- Bayer Heart Health Advantage – Each capsule has 400 mg plant sterols. King Soopers, Walgreens, WalMart

Protein Bar with Plant Sterols

- At South Denver Heart Center we offer Kardea Bars at our Coffee Cart with 1 gram of plant sterols in each bar! They also have 7 grams of fiber and 7 grams of protein in each delicious bar. Flavors include Lemon Ginger, Chai Spice, Cranberry Almond and Banana Walnut.