

**Dr. Sinatra's**  
**DO-IT-  
YOURSELF**  
**HEART &  
ARTERY**  
**REPAIR**  
**PROGRAM**

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# Dr. Sinatra's Do-It-Yourself Heart & Artery Repair Program

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**A** healthy heart begins with a healthy lifestyle. No therapy in the world is a license to gorge yourself on fried foods or sit around on the sofa all day. And the changes that come with age, combined with your genetics, may mean that even a healthy lifestyle isn't enough to keep your cardiovascular system in tiptop shape.

In this report, I'll share with you my program for remodeling your heart and arteries. This program includes not only eating right and exercising regularly, but also taking targeted supplements and addressing negative emotions. I'll give you the details on the best diet for your heart, and tell you about some foods with surprising cardiovascular benefits. I'll also tell you which supplements I recommend for overall heart health and controlling cholesterol. You'll learn the best exercises for strengthening your heart, boosting energy, and improving muscle tone. Finally, I'll share some techniques for confronting emotional issues that adversely affect your heart.

## **A Diet That's a Winner**

After a great deal of research, I've concluded that the best overall diet for your heart and arteries is a combination of the healthy eating of Mediterranean cultures and traditional Asian cuisine with its emphasis on fermented soy foods and seaweed. Both diets usually avoid hydrogenated fats and emphasize fish and vegetables. I call this combined method of eating the Pan-Asian Mediterranean (or PAM) diet. There's a remarkable amount of research to back up this healthy and delicious approach to nutrition.

The PAM eating plan consists of 45–50 percent slow-burning, low-glycemic-index carbohydrates; 30 percent healthy fats; and 20–25 percent protein. It includes fresh fruits and vegetables in season, fish, and whole grains. (Eat organic as much as possible.) Meat is used sparingly, often just enough for flavoring. Meals are based on numerous small portions for lots of variety,

and the lightest meal is at the end of the day, when the body is quieter and the metabolism slower. Here are some guidelines.

### **Increase your intake of:**

- Oatmeal and complex carbohydrate pastas, such as those made with spelt or Jerusalem artichoke
- Slow-burning, low-glycemic-index vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, kale, Brussels sprouts, and spinach
- Legumes such as lentils, soybeans, and chickpeas (these contain folic acid and help lower insulin levels)
- Fresh herbs such as rosemary, thyme, and basil
- Onions and garlic (two terrific heart healers noted for their antioxidant effects)
- Fruits such as cherries, plums, strawberries, blueberries, apricots, pears, and apples (melons, grapes, and kiwi are suitable, but they contain more sugar)
- Sources of essential fatty acids (EFAs) and protein, such as cold-water fish (especially fatty ones) and DHA-fortified organic eggs
- Fermented soy products such as miso, tempeh, and natto
- Healthy fats such as olive, sesame, walnut, and avocado oils
- Nuts and seeds, including walnuts, almonds, chestnuts, and flaxseed
- Organic cottage cheese, feta cheese, and grated Parmesan

### **Decrease your intake of:**

- Foods containing refined white flour or sugar such as breads, bagels, cookies, brownies, pies, and cakes
- Partially hydrogenated oils, found in commercially prepared crackers, cookies, chips, and other snacks
- Starchy vegetables such as corn, peas, and carrots
- Canned vegetables, because they're usually very high in sodium
- Processed fruit juices, which are often loaded with sugar
- Organ meats

## Dark Chocolate: A Health Food—in Moderation

Over the last several years, the body of research on cocoa and dark chocolate has been building, and the latest studies have shown that the darkest confections can help regulate blood pressure. Dark chocolate is also rich in oleic acid, a fatty acid that helps support LDL cholesterol concentrations. Furthermore, chocolate's flavonoids have been shown to be instrumental in preventing the oxidation of LDL cholesterol and inhibiting blood platelet clumping.

My favorite brand is Chocolove, a premium Belgian chocolate sold via the Internet ([www.chocolove.com](http://www.chocolove.com)) and in selected natural food stores and groceries, including Whole Foods Markets. Chocolove products have a high cocoa content, but their "strong dark" bar with 70 percent cocoa provides the best balance between taste and health benefits. I eat dark chocolate at least once a week, but no more than one ounce at a time, savored slowly.

- Sodas (regular and diet), since they are high in sweeteners and chemicals your body does not need
- Omega-6 oils such as corn, safflower, sunflower, and canola

On this diet, you'll eat plenty of fiber-bearing fruits and vegetables. For example, grapefruit (be sure to eat all the white pulp) contains pectin, an excellent fiber source that helps lower lipids. One pear or an apple a day also provides significant fiber. Similarly, baked, kidney, and navy beans are high in fiber.

Both soluble and insoluble fiber help cleanse the colon and decrease transit time in the intestines so more toxins are eliminated. The benefits of fiber are even greater than once thought. Studies have shown a stunning 29-percent reduction in heart disease for every 10-gram increase in fiber.

High-fiber foods are also great sources of phytonutrients, including flavonoids, phytoestrogens, lignans, and carotenoids. These precious nutrients, which comprise a huge part of the Mediterranean diet, make it the best diet for helping to prevent heart disease. For more on PAM, visit my website, [drsinatra.com](http://drsinatra.com).

## Top Supplements for a Healthy Heart

In addition to eating heart-healthy foods, there are some supplements you should consider adding to your daily regimen. The following supplements are particularly effective for heart

health, because they support healthy blood sugar and blood lipid levels.

As you read on, it may sound like you need to take a lot of supplements in order to support your heart, but please don't be overwhelmed by these recommendations. Managing blood sugar and blood lipids is a very individual thing. Think of your heart-supporting options as a smorgasbord of sorts. You can pick and choose from these options. Experiment and see which work best for you. You can find all of them at your local health food store or online.

## Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)

I believe coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is an important nutrient in my core program to help maintain a healthy heart. It enhances energy at the cellular level, especially in the heart, enabling the heart muscle to pump blood more efficiently. CoQ10 also helps maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

Research has shown that coenzyme Q10 helps regulate the oxidation of LDL—the pivotal step in artery clogging. CoQ10 essentially prevents polyunsaturated fatty acids from oxidizing in the LDL particle. As we age, the levels of CoQ10 in the body decrease. Statin drug therapy has also been shown to deplete CoQ10 levels. CoQ10 supplements may help replenish these levels. To help support your heart, I recommend taking 50–100 mg of CoQ10 per day.

## Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids

Omega-3 essential fatty acids (so called because of their molecular structure) can help lower blood triglyceride levels. I recommend taking a supplement that gives more per day of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) than EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) as DHA is more beneficial for the heart, eyes, and brain. Take 1–2 grams daily.

**Note:** Fish oil supplements are a popular source of omega-3s, but you need to be careful because these products can have problems. Our ocean waters are getting more polluted, so fish can be contaminated with heavy metals and toxic chemicals; and the large factory ships that catch the fish don't do a very good job of processing it right away. Oils oxidize even before they're put into capsules.

Look for an omega-3 product that can guarantee freshness, preferably one that includes antioxidants (such as vitamin E ) to ensure stability and freshness. And strongly consider calamarine oil from squid or algae, since both contain more DHA than fish oil.

## Niacin

Niacin can give you a double boost; it reduces small particle LDL and raises HDL cholesterol levels. Start with 100 mg daily, and work up to 1,500 mg, if needed. Be sure to work with your physician if you're taking niacin, and don't substitute niacinamide; while it has the same vitamin action as niacin, it doesn't affect lipid levels as well. The problem of uncomfortable skin flushing is real, so be aware of the increased heat and tingling that affects almost everybody.

**Note:** Niacin should be used with caution if you have diabetes and you must work with your physician. However, one pharmaceutical company is marketing a prescription drug called Niaspan in doses up to 750 mg that is well-tolerated with minimal side effects. Ask your doctor about it.

## Tocotrienols

I can't say enough about the benefits of tocotrienols—vitamin E-like compounds that possess powerful antioxidant qualities. Tocotrienols promote normal cholesterol levels by helping reduce LDL cholesterol oxidation. And small amounts (as little as 10–60 mg daily) can go a long way toward interrupting the oxidation of LDL cholesterol.

## Pantethine

Pantethine, a component of vitamin B5 or pantothenic acid, promotes healthy cholesterol and triglyceride levels. The usual dose is 300 mg, three times a day. Pantethine is safe and has no side effects (unlike niacin), but it's very expensive. However, it works especially well in diabetics, so it may be worth the expense.

## Oligomeric Proanthocyanidins

Oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs) are very powerful nutrients found in most fruits and vegetables; they're particularly abundant in grapeseeds and pine bark. They're also readily absorbed into the bloodstream, which means

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## Coconuts Do a Heart Good

A simple food—one that’s been around for centuries—has been gaining popularity for its cardiac health supportive properties. The ordinary coconut—known for its sweet milk, great fiber, and ability to conk people on the heads in Marx Brothers movies—can do your heart good.

To illustrate the point, let’s look at a population study of the Polynesian islands of Tokelau and Pukapuka that involved about 2,500 people. Investigators tracked folks who consumed a high-fat diet derived primarily from coconuts; every one of their meals contained coconut in one form or another. The researchers reported that their overall health was much more favorable than that of Westerners. Despite a diet high in saturated fat, the participants did not seem to have high cholesterol (saturated fat is usually broken down into cholesterol).

The truth is, even though coconut oil is a highly saturated fat, it’s the oil least vulnerable to oxidative stress and free-radical formation. It’s probably the safest oil to use in all types of cooking. And because coconut oil contains medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs)—not the long-chain fatty acids in most fats/oils—it doesn’t raise cholesterol levels.

### Go Nuts Over Coconuts

Coconut oil has many favorable cardiovascular effects, including lowering LDL cholesterol. The effects of its MCFAs are similar to those of omega-3 fatty acids—that is, they make blood platelets less sticky. Researchers also demonstrated that coconut’s MCFAs can neutralize and kill many microorganisms, bacteria, and viruses that are responsible for periodontal disease, herpes, and even bladder infections.

So it’s advisable to incorporate coconut oil into your daily diet. It can be found in health food stores in various sizes and brands. Similar to olive oil, brands vary in taste, so you may first want to purchase a small amount to see if it’s to your liking.

A good way to get coconut oil into your diet is to use it for cooking. Just remember not to heat it to the point of smoking. Any oil, including coconut oil, can produce toxic byproducts when overheated. Another way to consume coconut oil is to mix it with olive oil to make a salad dressing or add it to steamed vegetables.

Of course you can also eat coconut or drink coconut milk. Coconut milk can be used to make shakes and smoothies. You can use it in hot or cold cereal, or pour it over seasonal organic blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries. I like to bake fish in coconut milk to keep it moist and enhance the flavor. An excellent source of coconut oil is Tropical Traditions ([www.tropicaltraditions.com](http://www.tropicaltraditions.com)).



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their benefits are felt almost immediately throughout the body. OPCs are incredible free-radical scavengers. Because of that, they help control the oxidation of LDL cholesterol and support blood sugar levels as well. I recommend taking 150–300 mg of grapeseed extract or 100 mg of Pycnogenol (pine bark extract) daily.

## **Garlic**

Garlic is a popular food and dietary supplement recommended for cardiovascular health. A number of double-blind, placebo-controlled trials suggest that garlic has a positive effect on cholesterol. Garlic contains numerous biologically active substances, most notably sulfur-containing compounds such as allicin and alliin. Garlic acts as a potent antioxidant and protects LDL cholesterol from free-radical oxidation. I recommend 500–1,000 mg of enteric-coated softgel garlic capsules (softgels are better absorbed in the body), or at least one or two fresh cloves of garlic a day.

## **Turmeric**

If you like Eastern Indian food like I do, you'll be happy to know you can reduce inflammation and get antioxidant protection from turmeric, the yellow-orange spice commonly found in this cuisine. Turmeric is an amazing herb with more than 6,000 years of medicinal use! The active ingredients in turmeric are curcuminoids, which give turmeric its brilliant color. If you don't care for the taste of this herb, you can take turmeric extract. I recommend 250–500 mg daily.

## **Bergamonte Extract**

The Bergamot orange comes from an area in Italy called Calabria. The fruit is sour and the aromatic skin produces an essence used to flavor Earl Grey and Lady Grey teas, marmalades, and liqueurs. But there's also some interesting scientific work demonstrating potent cardiovascular effects generated by an extract of the juice. The extract, known as Bergamonte, offers key lipid and blood sugar benefits. In particular, it has the ability to reduce triglycerides and increase HDL cholesterol. This is a big deal because the triglyceride/HDL ratio has shown over time to be a paramount indicator of coronary artery health. The ideal healthy ratio: triglycerides no more than

double the HDL value, such as triglycerides of 100 mg/dl and HDL of 50 mg/dl. A good ratio is under 3.5.

The other big benefit of Bergamonte is that it can reduce blood sugar. If you can reduce blood sugar you can help knock down the insulin level and inflammatory activity in the body. The active ingredients contained in Bergamonte extract are polyphenol, flavonone, and flavone compounds that also support healthy blood vessels by protecting the sensitive endothelial lining. I recommend 500–1,000 mg of Bergamonte extract daily.

## **Exercise: Just Do It!**

There is no other lifestyle modification with such immediate and long-lasting benefits for your health and well-being as exercise. Even simple exercises strengthen your heart and circulatory system, build stamina, and improve your state of mind.

The more weight you carry, the harder your heart has to work. When you're overweight, your heart actually has to push your blood through fat that lines and narrows your blood vessels. It's like trying to battle your way through a subway station at rush hour.

You don't have to pump iron or join a gym to have a healthier body. The simple, fun exercises I'm about to share with you may not give you a triathlete's body, but they will give you more energy, better muscle tone, a happier outlook, and a healthy heart. (Please consult with your doctor before you begin any exercise program.)

## **Warming Up and Stretching Your Muscles**

To avoid injury, it is important to warm up and stretch your muscles before exercising. Be sure to warm up before you stretch. Never stretch cold muscles because you may tear them. Walking in place or riding a stationary bicycle for five minutes is a great way to warm up. When you stretch, do not hold your breath. Stretch slowly and hold the position just short of pain. Avoid bouncing.

Here are some stretches you can do after you warm up. You can also repeat them at the end of your exercise session to help you cool down.

- *One-Quarter Head Circles:* Starting with your ear near your shoulder on one side, rotate your head around to the front,

## Exercise Safely

Be alert to warning signs that you may be exercising too hard or too much. If you experience any of the following, stop exercising immediately:

- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Palpitations
- Shortness of breath (unable to carry on a conversation)
- Jaw pain
- Arm tingling or numbness
- Tight feeling in the lungs (bronchospasm).

Learn to listen to your body. Also, be aware of any symptoms that you may experience during exercise or up to an hour after you finish your exercise session. If you feel ill, stop exercising and rest. If symptoms persist after three to five minutes of rest, seek medical attention immediately.

ending with your ear near your shoulder on the other side. Roll your head back to the other side. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

- *Arm Circles:* With one arm, make a backward circle with your palm facing out, thumb pointed up. Repeat 10 to 15 times with each arm. Then make forward arm circles with your palm facing in, thumb pointed down. Repeat 10 to 15 times.
- *Calf Stretch:* Stand an arm's length from a wall. Lean into it, bracing yourself with your arms. Place one leg forward with your knee bent. Do not put weight on this leg. Your other leg should be back, with your knee straight and heel down. Keeping your back straight, move your hips toward the wall until you feel a stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Relax. Repeat with your other leg.

## Aerobic Activity Boosts Energy and Strengthens Your Heart

### Walking

Did you know that 30 minutes of exercise will keep your metabolic rate up for another hour? So the longer you exercise, the greater the benefits. Remember, you don't need a lot of fancy equipment or a health club membership—just a comfortable pair of walking shoes.

If you haven't been active for a while, start out easy by walking for just 10 minutes a day. Your goal should be to add

five minutes a week, building up to 30 minutes total, five days a week. Walk with a friend to make it fun!

### *Thinking About Running?*

I advise against strenuous exercise like jogging or running, especially if you're just starting an exercise program. Studies have shown a connection between heart attacks and sudden exertion, while moderate exercise has been shown to reduce the long-term risk of coronary artery disease.

### *Dancing*

Dancing reduces stress, and you don't have to work up a sweat or push yourself until you're out of breath to benefit from this dynamic exercise. Dancing also enhances your well-being and can give you a happier outlook. You can easily create an exercise session by adding a bit of stretching, yoga, and weight training.

For starters, put on music, warm up with a good stretch and some deep-breathing, and then dance for 10 to 15 minutes. Add in some free weights and finish with yoga and stretching exercises to cool down.

## **Exercises That Strengthen Your Body and Improve Muscle Tone**

### *Weight Training*

Adding weights to your exercise routine helps to promote a healthy heart and bones. Not only does using weights increase endurance, but some researchers believe that strength training may also reduce subsequent cardiac events and the risk of sudden death.

Go easy when weight training. I recommend 20 minutes two or three times a week. Make sure you take a day off between weight training sessions to give your muscles time to heal.

When weight training, choose a routine that is challenging but won't cause you to overexert yourself. For example, you can use light hand or ankle weights (2–3 pounds for women, 5–10 pounds for men), or exercise “bands” that you stretch with your arms and legs. Work slowly and smoothly, inhaling as you lift your arms or legs, and exhaling as you lower the weights. A strength training “set” consists of 8 to 12 lifts with weights or exercise band stretches. Be sure to exercise at a pace that is comfortable for you, and rest between sets. Increase the number

of sets gradually, and add more weight as you gain strength, but don't push yourself to the limit.

If you decide to incorporate weights into your exercise regimen, here is an exercise to get you started.

### *Biceps Curls*

Biceps curls strengthen and tone the muscles in your arms. Start out with a weight in each hand and your arms resting at your side. Slowly bend your arms at your elbows, and lift the weights up to your shoulders. Then slowly lower them back down to your side. Repeat for 10 repetitions, and work up to 3 sets.

### *Crunches*

Crunches have an incredible impact when your goal is to tone and strengthen your midsection, and they are easy.

Lie down on your back with your knees bent. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Your hands should be clasped behind your head with your elbows touching the ground. Without arching your lower back or pulling on your neck, curl your upper body forward and up. Hold this position for a second, and then lower your body back down to the floor, but not all the way to the "relaxed" starting position. Your upper body should be just above the floor and your abdominal muscles still contracted. Repeat for 10 to 20 repetitions, and work up to 3 sets.

### *Wall Pushups*

Wall pushups exercise your upper body by working your arms, shoulders, and chest, and they are a great alternative if you are not able to do a full pushup on the ground.

Stand a little more than an arm's length away from a wall. Facing forward, extend your arms, keeping them at shoulder height. With your arms straight and supporting your weight, lean forward, and place your palms against the wall. Now lower your upper body toward the wall, using only your arms to support your weight (make sure your body is dead weight). Push your body back to the starting position, again using only the strength of your arms. Repeat for 10 to 20 repetitions, and work up to 3 sets.

No matter what types of exercise you decide to do, once you create an exercise routine that is suitable for you, be sure to stick with it on a regular basis. Remember, it's not what you do, but how

## Quickest Way to Lower Your Blood Pressure: Relax

Normal blood pressure is essential for a healthy heart. Blood pressure readings below 120/80 are considered normal for adults. Readings where the top number (systolic pressure) is 120–139 or the bottom number (diastolic pressure) is 80–89 should be monitored carefully. Readings consistently above 150/90 are a risk factor for heart attacks.

Blood pressure readings are like the Dow Jones average; they go up and down, even in a five-minute interval. Remember, your heart is a pulsating, dynamic organ, so your blood pressure will vary, sometimes as much as 20 to 30 mm in successive readings. How can you make sure your numbers are going down instead of up? The key is to relax.

When taking a resting blood pressure reading, I don't let people talk. Talking will drive your numbers up. (Air traffic controllers as a group have higher-than-normal blood pressure. They're under enormous pressure, and they talk all the time.) I also avoid taking BP if the patient rushed to my office, especially if he or she was caught in traffic, if the outside temperature is very cold, or if some emotional stress issues are ongoing. Even a cup of coffee just prior to the test can change the data.

It's clichéd but true—the worst place to take a blood pressure reading is a doctor's office. Many people come in with considerable anxiety (hyperarousal) about their blood pressure, and that drives the numbers up. I guess a dental office could be worse, but in a cardiology office setting, just thinking about BP is often enough to make things look worse than they really are. There's even a name for this phenomenon—white-coat hypertension. This is why blood pressure readings may often be inaccurate; unless, of course, you regularly live in that same anxious state. I have more faith in home blood pressure numbers than I do in those recorded in a doctor's office.

often you do it that will keep your energy levels high, your muscles toned, your outlook on life positive, and your body healthy.

## Reduce Your Emotional Risk Factors

Through years of conducting Healing the Heart workshops, I have observed that sadness and a negative outlook on life, along with an inability to cry or express anger, correlate strongly with poor heart health. These observations have led me to explore alternative methods of addressing—and shifting—these negative personality factors.

## How to Unlock Armored Emotions

To increase energy flow, you must know how to breathe fully. You do this by taking deep breaths in through your nose and feeling air fill your lungs. Then, slowly exhale through your mouth, allowing yourself to sigh. Breathing deeply can put you back in touch with your body and bring emotions to the surface. Your body becomes more alive, increasing your energy, vitality, and passion for living.

When you first begin deep breathing, don't be surprised if it triggers crying, the body's way of discharging sadness and hurt. Deep sobs allow energy bound by stress to be released from the thoracic cavity, freeing the grip of muscular tension on your heart. A good cry also enhances oxygen to cells and stimulates the release of biochemicals to the brain, which encourages relaxation.

Learn to say "No," and mean it. Sometimes I encourage patients to kick and shout to release long-suppressed hurts and anger. Using your voice and expressing negativity, jutting out your jaw and making a fist, and even using upper arm motions such as striking out or hitting pillows can ease tension, particularly in your upper back and neck.

Laughter is potent medicine for the heart. When you laugh with your whole heart, the depth of your breathing increases, releasing trapped energy from your chest, diaphragm, and even your groin muscles. Laughter releases endorphins and DHEA, hormonal markers of health and well-being. Let yourself go every now and then, and feel free to be silly and uninhibited.

## Begin to Shift Your Attitude

With the support of a psychotherapist or other skilled coach or trainer, you can learn to bring up suppressed emotions such as anger and fear, without a sense of abandonment or humiliation. When you're "in touch" with yourself, you're in touch with your body and emotions. You can gain insight into how persistent beliefs that shaped your personality long ago may no longer serve you. Your "personality" is not carved in stone. Psychotherapy can unlock long-held emotions and defenses, especially if you are prone to bouts of hostility or rage.

Your health, especially your heart health, is directly related to your capacity for emotional growth, self-expression, and willingness to be supported with a vibrant social network. Without

these crucial “life support” systems in place, as life goes on, you’ll be more vulnerable to isolation, alienation, heartbreak, and serious health risks.

## Tap Into These Powerful Emotional Healers

**Spirituality and prayer.** More and more, physicians and healthcare providers are discovering that spirituality can be a healing tool. Scientific evidence suggests that faith, religion, and/or belief in God lowers death rates and increases health, and double-blind studies worldwide have shown that people who are prayed for by others have higher survival rates and fewer complications from heart surgery.

**Meditation and relaxation.** Relaxation is characterized by an absence of physical, mental, and emotional tension. Researchers have identified relaxation as the vehicle with the highest potential for “opening the door to change” by reconnecting the body, mind, and spirit.

**Treat yourself to a massage or other type of bodywork,** such as Reiki, Feldenkrais, or the Alexander Technique—relaxation therapies that lower heart rate, promote muscle relaxation, help break up scar tissue, relieve certain types of pain, and improve circulation. Most importantly for the heart, bodywork can access old traumas, release stored emotions, and free blocked energy that is literally stored in cellular memory.

## Getting With the Program

A healthy lifestyle—including following my PAM diet and eating other heart-healthy foods and exercising regularly—is essential for your cardiovascular health. Taking targeted supplements and addressing negative emotions can also help. What has been really exciting to me is to watch my patients make tremendous strides in improving their heart health by following such a program.

So you see, when it comes to the health of your heart and arteries, drugs are by no means your sole—or even your best—option. Rest assured, if you follow (and experiment with) my heart protocol, better health will be in your hands in a matter of weeks.

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