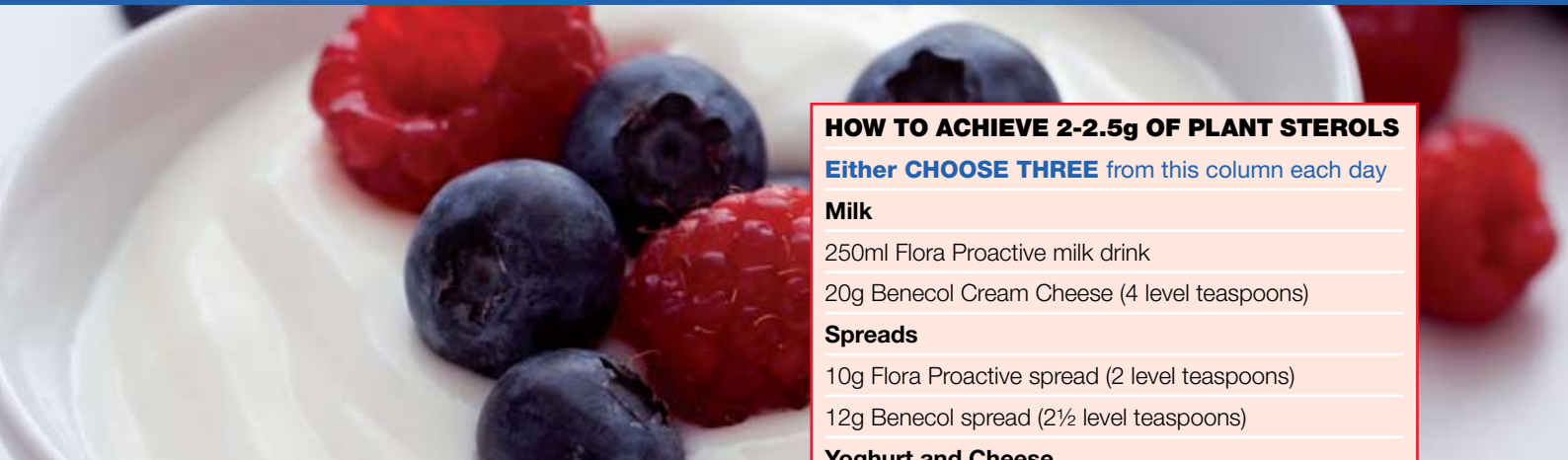


PLANT STEROLS

**HOW TO ACHIEVE 2-2.5g OF PLANT STEROLS**

Either **CHOOSE THREE** from this column each day

Milk

250ml Flora Proactive milk drink

20g Benecol Cream Cheese (4 level teaspoons)

Spreads

10g Flora Proactive spread (2 level teaspoons)

12g Benecol spread (2½ level teaspoons)

Yoghurt and Cheese

125g Flora proactive yoghurt

125g Benecol yoghurt

20g Benecol Cream Cheese (4 level teaspoons)

or **CHOOSE ONE** from this column each day

Yoghurt drinks

67.5 g Benecol Yoghurt drink

100g Flora Proactive Yoghurt drink

Dairy free drinks

65.5g Benecol Dairy Free Fruit and Soya drink

What are they?

Plant sterols are structurally similar to cholesterol and can be divided into phytosterols and phytostanols. Their cholesterol lowering effects have been known for some time.

What do they do?

They work by mimicking cholesterol and competing with it for absorption. The result is that less cholesterol and less bile (a cholesterol bi-product) is absorbed from the gut. This results in further breakdown and recycling of cholesterol. Plant sterols can reduce cholesterol levels in 3 weeks and are considered to be the most effective single food that can lower cholesterol as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Where can I find them?

Plant sterols are naturally found in a wide range of foods such as vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. However, for most people, it is not possible to achieve the optimum intake from ordinary foods.

Are they safe for everyone to use?

Plant sterols have been thoroughly researched and approved for use in foods. However they are targeted specifically at people who have raised cholesterol and there are no significant benefits for other groups of the population. Although they can be taken by children who have inherited high cholesterol (under supervision) they should be avoided by other children and women who are pregnant or are breast feeding.

What amounts should I take?

Scientific studies suggest that eating between 2 and 2.5 g of plant sterols each day can significantly reduce LDL (bad cholesterol) by 10%.

More information

www.florahearts.co.uk

www.benecol.co.uk

Do they work well with cholesterol lowering medicines?

Because they work in different ways, plant sterols can be used effectively alongside statin therapy and produce an additive benefit. They can also be used alongside fibrates. Patients taking Ezetrol (Ezetimide), a drug which inhibits cholesterol absorption in the small intestine will receive no additional benefit however. This is because this drug has a similar mechanism of action to plant sterols.

Why are plant sterols not recommended by some health professionals?

The recent NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) guidelines on Lipid Modification do not recommend plant sterols as a way of preventing first heart attacks.

This is simply because the working party could find no human intervention trails that show a reduction in heart attacks as a result of consumption. They recommended that such trials take place. There is however substantial evidence to show that both plant sterols and stanols do reduce cholesterol levels which are a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Health Professionals

www.flora-professional.co.uk/healthcareprofessional

www.benecol.net