

# Mayo Clinic Minute: Capsaicin connection to heart

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An ingredient in hot peppers has long been used in topical creams to relieve muscles aches and arthritis pain. Dr. DeLisa Fairweather, a Mayo Clinic cardiovascular disease researcher, says capsaicin, when included

as part of a healthy diet, also may improve heart health.

"Hot peppers, or even green or red peppers, are able to reduce [heart disease](#) and reduce death from heart disease," says Dr. Fairweather.

Capsaicin has anti-inflammatory properties. Why is that important for [heart health](#)? Dr. Fairweather says inflammation drives plaque buildup in blood vessel walls. And since capsaicin reduces inflammation, it may help prevent that process from happening. Capsaicin also may help boost your immune system, further reducing risk.

"There really could be important benefits that you could have from eating hot chili peppers, especially in their ability to reduce some of these immune cell responses that are driving atherosclerosis and heart attacks," says Dr. Fairweather.

More research is needed to learn more about capsaicin and heart health. But Dr. Fairweather says including [hot peppers](#) in a healthy diet could be a great idea.

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