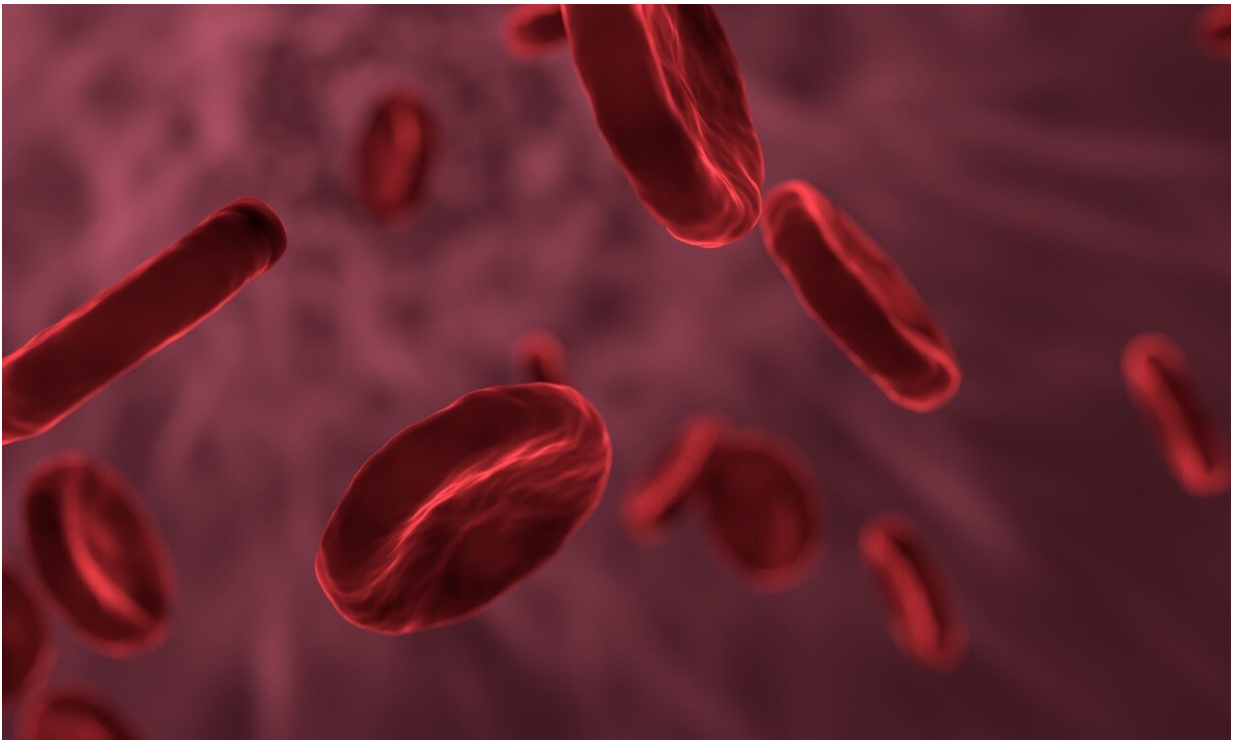


# Quinn on Nutrition: ABC's to manage diabetes

November 5 2020, by Barbara Quinn

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An editor who publishes this column in Australia called me out after my recent three part series on the ABC's of good foods. He pointed out that, after P for peas and Q for quinoa, I ended the second of three columns with "R we out of space again? To be continued..." I then began the last installment with S for strawberries.

"Did you forget the letter, R?" he asked.

Yes, I suppose I did. So with apologies, here is the missing R-food:

**Ricotta.** It's a creamy Italian cheese made from the milk of sheep, cows, goats or Italian water buffaloes, says Wikipedia. While other cheeses are made from solid curds formed in the cheese-making process, ricotta is a product of the liquid whey that is left behind. In fact, ricotta in Italian literally means "recooked" (another R word).

Ricotta is rich in whey protein, which has been shown to be an effective type of protein for muscle strength and maintenance. This cheese is also a great source of calcium, vitamin B12 and a host of other vitamins and minerals. That's really rather remarkable.

Speaking of ABC's, if you have diabetes, the beginning letters of the alphabet can help you remember three effective ways to steer clear of the scary complication from this disease. Heart attack and stroke, for example, can result from uncontrolled diabetes because high [blood](#) sugars are toxic to blood vessels and arteries. These ABC's can save a lot of heartache, say experts:

A stands for A1C (A-one-C), a [simple blood test](#) that gives you a good estimate of how much sugar has been circulating in your blood over the past 3 months. Damage to nerves, blood vessels, eyes and kidneys can happen when A1C is too high. A general goal for most people is to keep that A1C number less than 7% .

B is for Blood Pressure—the force that pushes against your [blood vessels](#) when your heart pumps blood. Blood pressure higher than 140/90 means your heart must work harder to push life-giving blood through your body.

C is for Cholesterol, the good and the bad. Good HDL cholesterol helps keep the tributaries to and from the heart clear of bad LDL cholesterol. Healthful HDL levels should be 40 or higher for men and 50 or higher for women. Daily exercise and a diet low in sugar is a smart way to increase good HDL levels. Conversely, lousy LDL values can be kept low with a diet high in plant-based foods and low in saturated fats.

So there we have it. Keep your blood sugar levels in check. Monitor your [blood pressure](#) often and do whatever it takes to stay within a normal range. Check your good and bad cholesterol numbers at least once a year. And remember your ABC's.

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