matter to the best advantage: in particular calcium, iodine, and sodium which all play a part in maintaining the health and elasticity of the arterial walls.  

Investigating the question from yet another angle, Dr. Seiban Arasaki has shown that a hot water extract of kombu (kelp, Laminaria sp.) “provides a parallel reduction of both maximum and minimum blood pressures.” The effective element, the amino acid Laminine, was identified in 1964. 

In conclusion, both oriental and herbal medicine recommend sea vegetables as part of a heart healthy diet. This tradition is supported by recent scientific research. Sea vegetables provide an excellent amount of heart healthy nutrition per calorie consumed, as well as non-nutritional phytochemicals, and it would be wise to learn to use and enjoy them.

References:


• **Sea Vegetables and Cholesterol**  
  Traditional Oriental medicine has long held that the use of seaweeds lowers the risk of heart disease. It should be no surprise that recent research on some sea vegetables have shown their ability to lower plasma cholesterol levels.

  Doctor Zakir Ramazanov, writing in *Neutraceuticals World*, states, “Sea vegetables have been shown to lower significantly plasma cholesterol levels and the active compounds have been identified...This ability to reduce plasma cholesterol levels and to increase serum lipolytic activity may explain their use in the prevention of arteriosclerosis.”¹

  In his book, *Vegetables from the Sea*, Dr. Seiban Arasaki identifies five different studies of how seaweed or seaweed extracts have been found to lower blood plasma cholesterol in animals and/or humans. Kombu or kelp (*Laminaria sp.*), nori (*Porphyra*), Irish Moss (*Chondrus*), and bladderwrack (*Fucus*) are among the species mentioned in these studies. He further mentions a study by Professor S. Kado of Tohoku University who found that people living in areas of Japan that ate the most seaweed had the greatest life spans and lowest heart failures often associated with high plasma cholesterol levels.²

• **Sea Vegetables and Blood Pressure**  
  Another key to heart health is healthy blood pressure. It is known that a higher dietary intake of certain minerals, especially potassium, is associated with lower mean systolic pressure and lower absolute risk of hypertension.

  Sea vegetables are an excellent food source of colloidal, chelated minerals and trace elements, including abundant amounts of potassium - known to be important in preventing hypertension - in healthy proportions to sodium, calcium, magnesium, and other heart healthy minerals.

  And these minerals are easy to utilize. Dietician Debra Ahern, Ph. D., R.D., reported her findings that sea vegetables not only provide high levels of potassium, but also chloride, a means for the body to more easily retain the potassium. She writes, “Chloride may play an indirect positive role in hypertension by allowing renal retention of potassium. If this is the case, potassium sources that provide chloride may be more effective in raising blood plasma levels than fruits and vegetables. The high chloride content of those seasonings with seaweed makes them good sources of potassium for clients at risk of hypokalemia (too little potassium).”³

  Another way the intense mineralization of sea vegetables helps blood pressure is described by a British naturopath, Dr. Eric Powell, Ph.D., N.D. He relates his successful treatment of patients using a kelp called Fucus, and theorized that kelp has a normalizing action upon the thyroid and parathyroid. He wrote, “Better function of the parathyroid glands means that the system can take up and utilize mineral

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