

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Cholesterol Medications**
- **Fats**
- **Breakfast Smoothie**
- **Cholesterol**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Front Story** 1
- Tip of the Month** 1
- Recipe** 2
- Quote of the Month** 2
- Did you Know** 2
- Our Info** 3

Do I really need my Cholesterol Medication?

Do I really need my cholesterol medication? Well let's take it from the top and discuss what cholesterol is and why it can be harmful. Then the benefits and need for medication can be discussed. Cholesterol is a fat like substance, also called a lipid, that travels in the bloodstream in the form of lipoproteins. Cholesterol is needed for the body to form hormones, vitamin D, and substances that aid in digestion. Your body produces all the cholesterol it needs but cholesterol is also obtained from diet. Lipoproteins come in two forms: low density lipoproteins (LDL) and high density lipoproteins (HDL). It is important to have healthy levels of both. LDL, or "bad"



cholesterol tends to cause plaque in the arteries when the levels are too high. This can lead to heart attack and stroke. HDL or "good" cholesterol helps transport cholesterol back to the liver. The liver helps remove cholesterol from the body. The higher the level of LDL, the higher the chances of getting heart disease. The higher the HDL is, the lower the risk for developing heart

disease. A 1 mg/dl increase in LDL is associated with a 2-3 percent increase in risk for heart disease. Likewise, a 1 mg/dl decrease in HDL causes a 3-4 percent increase in risk for heart disease. In someone who is trying to prevent heart disease, eating a low fat heart healthy diet and exercising may be enough to keep the cholesterol levels in a normal and low range.

That is called primary prevention. However, in individuals who have already developed heart disease, peripheral vascular disease, or have had a stroke or heart attack, medication is indicated. The drugs known as the statins are recommended to further reduce cardiovascular events and cardiovascular death. Statins have been studied extensively in tens of thousands of individuals over the years. (1,5).

Continued on page 3....

Tip of the Month

Decreasing Saturated Fats in the Diet

1. First step is to read your labels!
2. Avoid baked goods, especially sweets, and fried foods.
3. Limit fatty beef, pork, lamb, and poultry with skin on it.
4. Limit lard, cream, and butter.
5. Use skim or fat free dairy products instead of whole or 2 percent products.
6. Limit palm or palm kernel oil and coconut oil.
7. Choose the leanest meats when able.
8. Try replacing some meats or meat portions with beans. (6).



Breakfast Strawberry Smoothie



Ingredients:

1 cup strawberries
1 banana
1\2 cup oats
1 tsp honey
2 Tb all natural peanut butter
1 cup skim milk
Handful of ice cubes

Directions:

1. Place ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Enjoy!

If you are very active or underweight and need more calories, then the amount of peanut butter could easily be increased to 4 Tb or even half a cup if needed.

Nutrition Info

Yields 8 servings
1 Serving = 8 oz
Calories: 260
Total Fat: 8 g
Sat Fat: <1 g
Cholesterol: 5
Potassium: 623mg
Carbohydrates: 40 g
Protein: 13g
Fiber: 7g
Sugar: 21g
Sodium: 76 mg

Quote of the Month: “Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.” Og Mandino

Did you Know?

Did you know that cholesterol comes from two places? Your body makes cholesterol that it needs but it also comes from the diet. Foods from animal sources such as meat, dairy products, and poultry have cholesterol in them. For most people, diet and exercise can lower the cholesterol down into a normal range. However there are some individuals that have a genetic disorder that causes elevated cholesterol. These individuals require more specialized drug treatment. For the rest of us, we are left with diet, exercise, and sometimes medications. So let's get to the diet. What are the current diet recommendations to help lower cholesterol? There is not a straight number when it comes to limiting cholesterol in the diet based on current guidelines. However, a diet high in fruit, vegetables, and whole grains is advised.

Low fat dairy products, poultry, fish, non tropical vegetable oils, and nuts are also recommended. Limiting red meats, sweets, and sugar sweetened drinks is needed. The DASH diet and the Mediterranean diet help achieve these dietary goals. Saturated and trans fats should be limited. Saturated fat intake should not exceed more than 5-6 percent of the total calories for the day. When this type of regimen is followed, studies have shown that LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) can be lowered by 11-13 points or 11 percent. Limiting trans fats can also be helpful in lowering LDL cholesterol. Try to avoid partially hydrogenated oils and fats on meat and in dairy products. To get started with some low fat recipes visit http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/CholesterolToolsResources/Recipes-for-Cholesterol-Management_UCM_305655_Article.jsp. (1,2,3,4).

In a meta-analysis of over 90,000 individuals, statins were shown to reduce cardiovascular events by 22 percent for every 38.67 mg/dl drop in LDL. For each drop in LDL level, further risk reduction is obtained. Statins have also been shown to reduce the amount of plaque that is in the arteries. This is called regression of atherosclerosis. In people with heart disease, a meta-analysis of over 26 trials of statins showed a 21 percent reduction in the risk of stroke. The studies also showed that for every 10 percent the LDL is lowered, the risk of stroke is cut by 13 percent. Wow. Hopefully the above reasons are enough to continue taking your statin. If not, please talk to your healthcare provider or cardiologist for further guidance.

On the horizon are a new class of drugs that you may be hearing about in the news. This class of drug is called PCSK9 inhibitors. These drugs lower the LDL cholesterol and seem to have some cardiac benefits. However, the trials so far have been short term and long term trials are ongoing. Recently, the FDA advisory panel recommended to approve two drugs in this class. The FDA still has to finally approve these medications though before they will be available. If they do become available, they might face a few hurdles. One is cost. The other is that these medications are injections. Time will tell as more information becomes available on how and in whom these medications will be used. For now, statins are still the standard of care. (5, 7).

