

Busting the Cholesterol Myth

Natural Ways to Reduce the Risk of Heart Disease

The idea that cholesterol and saturated fat cause heart disease is ingrained in our culture. Everywhere we see ads for cholesterol and fat free, “heart healthy” foods. TV ads promote drugs to reduce cholesterol where “diet and exercise aren’t enough.” People eating a juicy hamburger or a big steak talk about these foods as a “heart attack waiting to happen.”

Unfortunately, most of what people have been led to believe about cholesterol is completely false. According to Mary Enig, an international expert in the field of lipid (fat) biochemistry, “The idea that saturated fats and high cholesterol cause heart disease is completely wrong, but the statement has been ‘published’ so many times over the last three or more decades that it is very difficult to convince people otherwise unless they are willing to take the time to read and learn what all the economic and political factors were that produced the anti-saturated fat agenda.” [As quoted in *Fat and Cholesterol are GOOD for You!*]

Uffe Ravnskov, an international expert on cholesterol and fats has this to say: “As one scientific study after another has shown, people can gorge on animal fat for many years and still keep their blood cholesterol low. What we have also learned is that atherosclerosis and heart attacks may occur whether one’s food is rich in saturated fat or not, and, most surprisingly, whether one’s cholesterol is high or low. Given these facts, is there any reason to think that heart attacks can be prevented by lowering cholesterol?”

The anti-cholesterol campaign is based on false assumptions and discredited studies. For example, the MRFIT study is often cited by doctors, health consultants and food producers as “the most exact database regarding the relation of risk factors to mortality in the healthy male U.S. population.” (Ravnskov) In reality, the MRFIT study found no significant correlation between cholesterol/fat intake and heart disease risk, but the data and the report were manipulated to show just the opposite. Unfortunately, many large industries (including the medical profession) are so invested in the anti-cholesterol campaign that they continue to disseminate bad information.

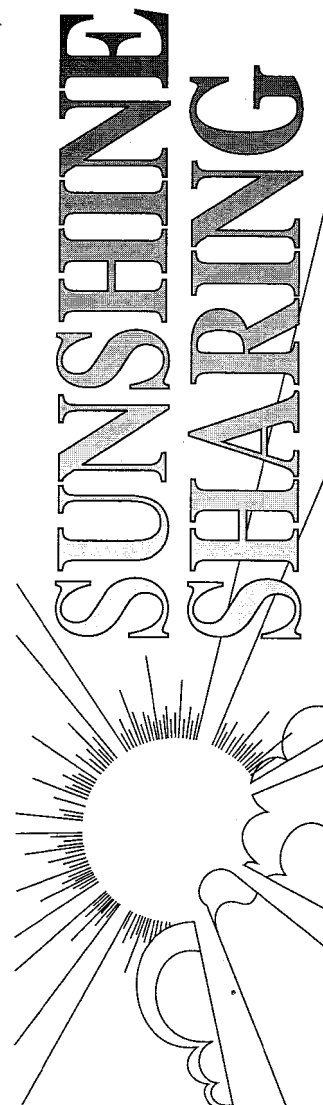
So, in this issue of *Sunshine Sharing* we’re going to do some myth busting and share with you the real information about cholesterol and saturated fat. We’re also going to talk about the real causes of heart disease and some real tips for prevention. But first, let’s check what you already know about cholesterol and heart disease.

Cholesterol Quiz

Mark each of the following statements true (T) or false (F). Check your answers on page two.

- ___ 1. The lower your cholesterol levels, the healthier you will be.
- ___ 2. To reduce your risk of heart disease, you should keep your cholesterol level below 200.
- ___ 3. Cholesterol helps protect the body from environmental toxins and infection.
- ___ 4. Statin drugs help to reduce the incidence of heart disease by lowering cholesterol.
- ___ 5. Cholesterol is important in maintaining fertility and sex drive.
- ___ 6. Eating foods high in fat will raise your cholesterol levels.
- ___ 7. Oxidative stress and inflammation are the primary causes of cardiovascular disease.
- ___ 8. The cholesterol in natural foods cannot stick to your arteries unless it becomes oxidized.
- ___ 9. HDL cholesterol is good cholesterol, while LDL is bad cholesterol.
- ___ 10. Low cholesterol levels increase your risk of cancer.

Check your answers on page 2



Your guide to better health the natural way.

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Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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Let's start by checking your answers from page one. Here are the correct answers: 1. *F*, 2. *F*, 3. *T*, 4. *F*, 5. *T*, 6. *F*, 7. *T*, 8. *T*, 9. *F*, 10. *T*. How well did you do? Surprised by the answers? Most people are because they've bought into the cholesterol myth. Read on and learn why these are the correct answers.

Cholesterol is Vital to Life

Cholesterol belongs to a group of compounds called sterols. It is, by far, the most abundant sterol in the human body. Cholesterol is a waxy substance, a lipoprotein (a fatty or "lipo" protein compound) that has many important functions in the body. The most important of these is in the formation of cholic acid, which is used to make bile salts. Bile salts are used to emulsify and digest fat. Between 60%–80% of the body's cholesterol is used for this purpose. This is why low fat diets can actually increase cholesterol in the blood, by reducing the need for bile. The cholesterol in bile is also needed to digest and absorb fat-soluble vitamins.

The second most important function of cholesterol is in the production of adrenal and reproductive hormones. Cholesterol is the basic building block for DHEA, pregnenolone, progesterone, testosterone, estrogen, aldosterone and cortisol. If cholesterol levels get too low, the body may have a difficult time making these hormones, which can result in fatigue, depression, infertility, loss of sex drive and other symptoms related to low levels of these hormones.

Another important use for cholesterol is in the skin. Along with other lipids, cholesterol helps make the skin impervious to substances that might otherwise penetrate it and helping to prevent water loss from the body. When our skin is exposed to sunlight, cholesterol is converted to vitamin D3, which is essential for the absorption and utilization of calcium, heart health and immune function. Vitamin D3 is now recognized as the number one nutritional deficiency worldwide and low levels contribute to osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Other functions of cholesterol include its role in the immune system. It is used to bind toxins, thereby reducing inflammation and protecting nerve and brain tissues from chemical damage. Higher cholesterol levels actually protect the body from damage during an infection by binding microbial toxins. Cholesterol is also needed to maintain the structural integrity of all cell membranes. It provides insulation for nerve cells that conduct electrical impulses, thus helping brain function. Clearly, cholesterol is not "evil," but is an important part of a functioning, healthy body.

More Cholesterol Myth-Busting

The liver produces about 75 percent of the cholesterol in your body. The rest comes from food. There are several forms of cholesterol, but the two most well known are low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL). LDL contains more fat and less protein, while HDL contains more protein and less fat.

HDL is often referred to as "good" cholesterol, and LDL is often referred to as "bad" cholesterol. This is actually a misconception. The body makes VLDL (very low density lipoprotein) in the liver and transforms it into LDL. LDL transports cholesterol (and the fatty acids it contains) to the tissues where it is needed. HDL is used to transport hormones and cholesterol (and toxins it binds) back to

the liver. Both forms of cholesterol are essential to health (i.e., "good"), and the body constantly adjusts the ratio of LDL to HDL to meet its needs at any given time, as both are necessary for good health.

The amount of cholesterol you need depends on your age, weight and other factors, but the medical industry would like to keep your serum cholesterol below 200. This is done in spite of the fact that it is perfectly healthy to have a cholesterol level well over 200. Years ago, the ranges considered normal were much higher, but they were lowered in order to push the cholesterol and heart disease hypothesis and justify the sale of cholesterol-reducing drugs. In reality, the normal cholesterol level for most adults is between 175–275. Unfortunately, many people who are well within this reasonable range are being pressured by doctors to take cholesterol-lowering drugs.



Cholesterol and Heart Disease

After all this you may wonder, what is the connection between cholesterol and heart disease? Well, it is true that cholesterol is a factor in the build-up of arterial plaque, but cholesterol, by itself does not cause arterial plaque to form. In order to make cholesterol stick to the arteries, it has to become oxidized. In other words, it has to suffer free radical damage.

Oxidized cholesterol is not found in natural foods like butter, eggs and red meat. However, when eggs, milk and butter are processed and turned into powdered eggs, milk, cheese and so forth the cholesterol oxidizes. Thus, oxidized cholesterol is only found in processed foods, such as cake mixes. Cholesterol can also become oxidized due to a lack of antioxidant nutrients or environmental toxins. Cigarettes, for example, are loaded with toxic chemicals, which is why smokers have a higher risk for cardiovascular disease.

Once cholesterol is oxidized and becomes sticky it can attach to damaged areas of the endothelium lining of the arteries. This triggers an immune reaction, which can become a chronic inflammatory "fire" in the lining of your arteries. This is where the arterial plaque that causes heart disease comes from.

The major thing to remember here is that it doesn't matter if your cholesterol levels are high or low. What matters is avoiding oxidized cholesterol, preventing body cholesterol from becoming oxidized and preventing arterial damage from toxins and infection.

Problems with Statins

Roughly \$15 billion of statin drugs (used to lower cholesterol) are sold annually and are taken by people who want to reduce their risk of heart disease. Some studies suggest that statin drugs provide a slight reduction in the risk of heart disease. However, before taking them, there are a few things you should know.

First, statins can have horrible side effects. They can contribute to memory loss, peripheral neuropathy and liver damage. They can decrease sex drive and even cause infertility. Side effects include upset stomach, headache, fatigue, skin rash, difficulty concentrating, erectile dysfunction, difficulty sleeping and nightmares.

Statins block the ability of the liver to manufacture cholesterol. Unfortunately, the pathway they block is the same one that produces Coenzyme Q10, a powerful antioxidant that helps prevent cardiovascular inflammation and is involved in energy production.

Worst of all, statins increase your risk of dying from other causes, such as cancer. So, they don't improve quality of life or lifespan in most people.

Secondly, research also suggests that their benefit is not because of their cholesterol-reducing action, but rather an anti-inflammatory action. And, there are much safer ways to reduce inflammation than statins, so it makes little sense for most people to use them. If a person is going to stay on a statin drug, however, it is wise for them to take **Co-Q10** daily to reduce side effects.

An alternative to statins is **Red Yeast Rice**, which is the natural source for the cholesterol-lowering compounds found in statin drugs. However, Co-Q10 should also be taken with the Red Yeast Rice because it blocks the same metabolic pathways in the liver as statins drugs.

If You Must Reduce Cholesterol

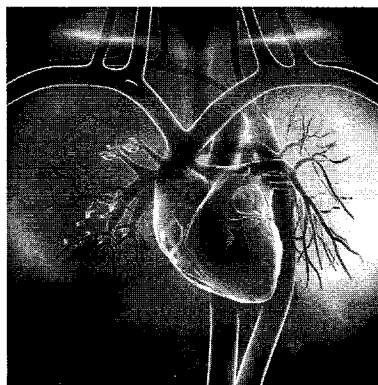
The most natural way to reduce cholesterol is to increase your consumption of good fats (like butter, olive oil and coconut oil) and fiber. Remember that most of the cholesterol in your body is used to make bile to digest fats. Adding fiber to the diet causes the cholesterol in the bile to be bound and removed from the body.

LOCLO and **Nature's Three** are both fiber supplements that have been formulated to help reduce cholesterol. You could also try **Fat Grabbers**, which are capsules containing fiber that binds to bile salts.

Garlic is also useful for improving cholesterol levels. A University of Pennsylvania study found that garlic extract lowered participants' total cholesterol levels by 7% and decreased their LDL levels by 10%. More importantly, research shows it helps lower blood pressure and can help to prevent, and possibly even reverse arteriosclerosis. Garlic also fights the infections that can damage arteries, creating areas where cholesterol can stick. Besides including garlic in your diet by eating it in your foods, you can also take **High Potency Garlic** tablets.

In the form of nicotinic acid, **niacin** can increase your level of HDL cholesterol by 25 to 35 percent (more than any drug), while lowering LDL cholesterol. So, if the fiber isn't lowering the cholesterol fast enough take one niacin tablet once or twice a day.

Other options include **Cholester-Reg II**, which contains a variety of nutritional substances that may be helpful in lowering cholesterol and improving circulatory health. Many people have also found **Guggul Lipids** and **he shou wu** helpful for reducing cholesterol.



The Dangers of Low Cholesterol

Before we discuss practical ways to reduce one's risk of heart disease, we do want to warn people about the dangers of low cholesterol, since it is a problem that is seldom addressed in modern medicine. Low cholesterol is associated with an increased risk of cancer, stroke, suicide, and death from coronary heart disease. Low cholesterol is also associated with infertility, erectile dysfunction, increased risk of infection, and reduced protection from neurotoxins, mercury and heavy metals.

The most critical problem is that the research shows that lowering your cholesterol does not decrease your risk of heart disease, but it does double your risk of dying from a heart attack if you have one. In fact, there is evidence that suggests that if you do have a heart attack you are more likely to survive it if your cholesterol is higher. For a detailed analysis of the flawed data linking cholesterol as a cause of heart disease, read some of the books listed under "Additional Help and Information" on this page.

Real Prevention

Of course, the only reason we're discussing cholesterol is because of its supposed link to cardiovascular disease. If that's your goal, stop focusing on cholesterol and start focusing on reducing inflammation and oxidative stress in your body. This is the real key to avoiding heart disease.

A healthy diet is the place to begin. Start by eating a lot of vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables like kale, mustard and collard greens, spinach, Swiss chard, bok choy and dark green leaf or romaine lettuce. It's also good to include some antioxidant-rich fruits, such as blueberries and other berries, pomegranates and apples. You may want to supplement with **Thai-Go**, a beverage rich in natural antioxidants.

Do an oil change by dropping margarine, shortening and processed vegetable oils from your diet. Use olive oil, coconut oil and butter instead. Supplementing your diet with **Super Omega-3 EPA** and the fat-soluble **vitamin D3** and vitamin K2 will also be helpful, as these nutrients reduce cardiovascular inflammation. They can also inhibit the oxidation of cholesterol. **Krill Oil with K-2** also contains omega-3 fatty acids.

Finally, severely reduce or eliminate all refined carbohydrates from your diet. While eating cholesterol-rich foods like butter and eggs and consuming naturally occurring saturated fats has NOT been correlated with increased risk of heart disease, high insulin levels have been demonstrated to be a major risk factor. Simple carbohydrates, like refined sugar, corn syrup and white flour spike insulin levels, increasing insulin resistance, which increases inflammation, contributes to high blood pressure and dramatically increases your risk of heart disease. So, if you really want to reduce your risk of heart disease (and be more healthy overall), say no to sugar and say yes to good fats and complex carbohydrates.

Another step you can take to reduce your risk of heart disease is to avoid environmental toxins as much as possible. Chlorine, bromides, solvents and other chemicals will not only increase inflammation in your body, they may cause cholesterol to oxidize. Since

Additional Help and Information

For more information on cholesterol, how to regulate it naturally and natural tips for preventing heart disease, contact the person who gave this newsletter to you. Their information should be found at the top of the following page. You can also consult the following sources:

The Cholesterol Myths: Exposing the Fallacy That Saturated Fat and Cholesterol Cause Heart Disease by Uffe Ravnskov, MD, Ph.D.

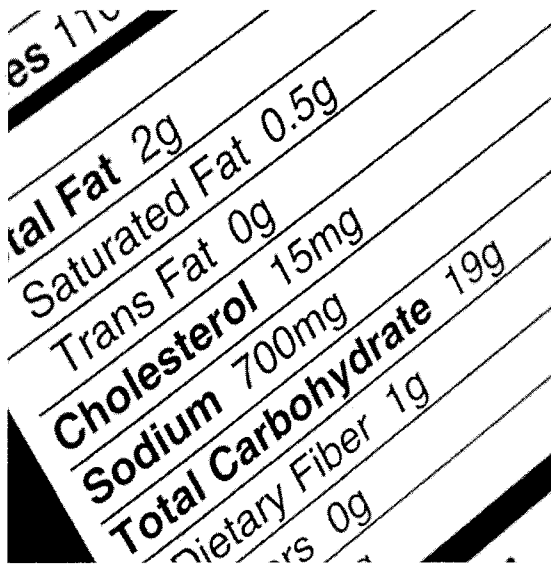
Ignore the Awkward: How the Cholesterol Myths are Kept Alive by Uffe Ravnskov
Fat and Cholesterol are Good for You! by Uffe Ravnskov

The Great Cholesterol Myth by Jonny Bowden, PhD and Stephen Sinatra, MD

Cholesterol and Cardiac Health by Kimberly Balas, ND and Steven Horne

The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products by Tree of Light

Continued on page 4



Learn the Truth About Cholesterol

Recognizing that heart disease is a leading cause of death, many people are anxious to take steps to prevent it. Unfortunately, they're being led to believe that lowering their cholesterol will help.

This newsletter clears up the misinformation about cholesterol, saturated fat and heart disease and provides tips for prevention that actually work.

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you can't avoid all toxins, it also helps to do a periodic cleanse such as **CleanStart** or the **Tiao He Cleanse**.

Exercise reduces your risk of cardiovascular disease and helps balance your blood sugar levels at the same time. Stress is also a big factor in heart disease because stress contributes to chronic inflammation. So, learn some good stress management skills. If you're under a lot of stress, consider taking some adaptogens like **Nervous Fatigue Formula** or **Eleuthero Root**.

Supplements for Cardiovascular Health

Besides these basic nutrition and lifestyle recommendations, there are some supplements that can be helpful for reducing your risk of heart disease. The first is **Co-Q10**, which reduces inflammation. If you have gum disease, there is a high probability that you also have cardiovascular inflammation. Co-Q10 can help with both.

Magnesium Complex is another important supplement to consider. It relaxes artery walls, lowers blood pressure and helps the heart function efficiently.

Solstic Cardio contains five grams of l-arginine, the amount research suggests can help to reduce blood pressure and inhibit plaque formation in the arteries. Solstic Cardio also contains vitamin D3 and other nutrients that promote cardiovascular health.

Finally, **MegaChel** contains high doses of antioxidant nutrients that can reduce plaque formation and improve peripheral circulation. This product can also be used as part of an oral chelation program to actually help reduce existing plaque and aid artery healing and repair from oxidative damage.

There are many other herbs and supplements that can be helpful for genuine prevention of cardiovascular disease. Talk to the person who gave this newsletter to you to learn more.