

Cholesterol Awareness Month

Issue 1

January 2011

Exercise & Cholesterol – a happy couple!

Along with weight and fat distribution, smoking, and dietary composition, exercise appears to be an important lifestyle factor that can improve cholesterol levels for many. In a recent study, when researchers controlled for all other factors, 16 weeks of aerobic exercise improved HDL levels by 5% (that correlates to a 10-15% decrease in CV risk) in older men and women. For those carrying excess weight the benefits of exercise may be even greater. A different group of researchers reported a 13% increase in HDL levels after only 10 weeks of exercise in obese subjects.

Just 4 days per week for a total of 120 minutes of aerobic exercise will give you healthier blood. If it's too cold outside, Messiah's fitness center is only a staircase away!

Cholesterol – it's not a 4-letter word!

- It's produced by the body and necessary for the building and maintaining of cells
- Testosterone and estrogen are produced from cholesterol
- It helps the liver produce bile which aids in the digestion of fat

BUT, there can be too much of a good thing!

- High levels of LDL can build up on arterial walls and form plaque which can lead to heart disease

Top Foods For Healthy Arteries

1. Oats high in fiber (like cheerios!)
2. Fish like salmon, herring and mackerel
3. Walnuts, almonds and other nuts
4. Olive oil, sunflower oil, and peanut oil
5. Soy and flax-containing foods
6. Fresh fruits and vegetables
7. Avocados and pomegranates

4 Big Lifestyle Changes You Can Make To Be Sure Cholesterol Does What It's Intended To Do and Not What It Isn't!

- Lose excess weight
- Exercise regularly
- Follow a diet low in saturated fat and high in fiber
- Stop smoking

What You Should Know About Cholesterol

- ❖ HDL extracts cholesterol from arterial walls and carries it to the liver
- ❖ Statins are the most effective and commonly used drugs to lower cholesterol
- ❖ One's total cholesterol reading is the total of HDL + LDL + 2TGL
- ❖ Knowing your total:HDL ratio is more important than knowing total cholesterol for predicting disease risk
- ❖ One's overall risk for heart disease should always be considered (not just cholesterol levels) when determining treatment for high cholesterol

Cholesterol By The Numbers

Total Cholesterol - < 200 optimal; >220 borderline high

HDL Cholesterol - > 60 optimal; < 40 borderline low

LDL Cholesterol - < 100 optimal; > 130 borderline high

Total:HDL ratio - < 4.0 optimal; > 4.5 borderline high

Did you know that one reason pre-menopausal women have a lower risk of heart disease is that estrogen raises HDL levels?

For more information: www.healthfinder.gov, www.Vytorin.com, www.heart.org;
Exp Biol Med, Banz et al. 2003 Apr;228(4):434-40; **Lipids Health Dis**. Martins et al. 2010; 9: 76