



The Beacon

The Newsletter of
Med-Cert, Inc.
Volume 1
Issue 9
October 2003

Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

"Guiding your way to better health management"

Cholesterol Your Heart Attack Risk

Know Your Risk

If you already have high cholesterol, there is plenty you can do to lower your cholesterol values and improve your health. If you do not know your cholesterol levels and you are in a high-risk group for developing Coronary Heart Disease (CHD), talk to your healthcare provider about having your cholesterol levels checked.

If your cholesterol levels are high, don't despair. High cholesterol can be modified, and there are active steps you can take to lower your cholesterol to a healthy range. Depending on your cholesterol levels, your medical history, and your risk factors for developing CHD, you will have many self-care options from which to select, including diet modification and physical activity. There also are very effective medication therapies for lowering cholesterol.

Source of Cholesterol

While too much fat in the blood and the body poses a health risk, a certain amount of fat is essential to several body functions, such as maintaining cellular structures and transmitting nerve impulses. Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in the body. Your liver manufactures roughly 80% of the cholesterol you have in your body. The other 20% comes from the food you eat. Cholesterol in the diet comes exclusively from animal sources,

particularly meats and dairy products. Eggs are probably the best-known source, containing 213 milligrams of cholesterol per yolk (more than two-thirds of the recommended daily allowance of cholesterol). In contrast, foods of plant origin contain no cholesterol.

Good and Bad Cholesterol

Cholesterol molecules travel through the blood stream in globular packages called lipoproteins, and there are different kinds depending on their size, density, and stability.

High-density lipoproteins (HDL) are small, dense molecules responsible for transporting cholesterol to the liver. This type of cholesterol is actually good for your body because it helps remove cholesterol from the arteries and protects against dangerous blockages (plaques) in the arteries. It also is less likely to oxidize and leave sticky plaques on artery walls.

People who exercise, do not smoke, and are not obese tend to have higher levels of HDL. Extremely low HDL levels can be a risk factor for CHD.

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) carries the majority of cholesterol through the bloodstream and delivers it to the cells of the body. These molecules are larger, less dense and less stable than HDL, and readily oxidize and deposit plaques on arterial walls. Therefore, LDL is known as the "bad" cholesterol because it is more likely to clog arteries and lead to heart disease.

Triglycerides

Triglycerides are fatty acids that act as the basic building blocks of fats. Your body converts excess ingested calories into triglycerides, which are stored in fat cells. As needed, hormones regulate the release of triglycerides from fat tissue to meet your body's energy needs. In terms of CHD prevention, triglycerides have not received as much attention as LDL- and HDL-cholesterol, but research suggests that high triglyceride levels can also be a risk factor for CHD.

Causes of High Cholesterol

Poor diet is a leading culprit when it comes to unhealthy cholesterol values. Inactivity and other lifestyle choices such as smoking habits contribute to unhealthy cholesterol values as well. Several conditions and diseases also can elevate cholesterol levels. These conditions and diseases include diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism, hypercholesterolemia, kidney disease, obstructive liver disease, and disorders such as familial hyperlipidemia. However, only small portions of high cholesterol cases are a result of these conditions.

Still other medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, can interact with unhealthy cholesterol levels in a way that increases your risk of developing CHD even more. It is important to reduce all risk factors by treating all conditions that contribute to heart disease.



Broccoli Bonus

Whole grains are not the only way to get your fill of fiber. You can sneak more fiber into your diet with vegetables such as broccoli, too.

A cup of boiled broccoli contains about 4.5 grams of fiber. Studies show that doubling the fiber intake of people with low dietary fiber intake could reduce colorectal cancer risk by as much as 40 percent. Other high-fiber veggies include peas, artichokes, and winter squash

Benefit: Eating 25 grams (38 grams if you are a man under 50) of fiber per day makes your RealAge 2.5 years younger than eating 12 grams of fiber per day.

3-Question Test Identifies Migraine

By asking three simple questions, you may be able figure out if you have a migraine - an often-missed diagnosis.

If you answer yes to at least two of these three questions, you could have a migraine, according to a new study.

1. Has a headache limited your activities for a day or more in the last three months?
2. Are you nauseated or sick to your stomach when you have a headache?
3. Does light bother you when you have a headache?

The study, appearing in the recent issue of *Neurology*, calls the test ID Migraine.

Researchers tried out the migraine screener on more than 400 patients making routine primary care visits to their doctor. Each patient completed a

nine-question survey. Patients in the study either had headaches that interfered with work, study, or daily life; or they wanted to talk to their doctors about their headaches.

The patients were referred later to one of 12 specialty headache centers where specialists diagnosed them without knowing the responses to the questionnaire.

Later, researchers compared the diagnosis from the specialists with the nine-question survey and came up with three questions that could solidly determine which patients had migraines. The questions worked regardless of sex, age, presence of other headaches, or previous diagnosis.

The researchers estimate that these three questions would accurately identify 93% of people with migraines.

Migraine headaches are more common than diabetes or asthma. Migraines strike women more frequently than men. The exact cause is unknown. Because the condition is so debilitating, researchers say they hope their simple screening tool will help more people get a proper diagnosis. They note that sometimes headaches have serious causes not identified by the screener, but they say the test should get patients and doctors talking about what is going on.



Juicy Nutrition for Fall

Are you spending less time in the sun these days? You can help maintain your blood levels of vitamin D by drinking fortified orange juice.

When daylight hours become shorter, your risk of a vitamin D deficiency increases. However, many orange juice manufacturers have begun adding vitamin D to their calcium-fortified products. In one study, vitamin D-fortified orange juice increased blood levels of vitamin D by 150 percent.

Benefit: Getting 400 IU of vitamin D and 1,200 milligrams of calcium per day can make your RealAge as much as 1.3 years younger.

Quotable Quote

"The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Recipe Corner



Tortellini Salad with Sun-Dried Tomato Dressing

Add grilled chicken or shrimp to this salad to create an entree. Serves 4 (as a side dish)
½ pound Tortellini, frozen (or dried), cheese filled

1 cup Mayonnaise

½ teaspoon Garlic, minced

2 teaspoon Basil, chopped

¼ cup Sun-dried tomatoes, re-hydrated and pureed

¼ cup Parmesan, grated

Cook the pasta according to the package directions. Drain and rinse with cold water. Set aside. Place the tomatoes in a bowl and cover with hot water. Allow to soak for 20 minutes. Drain off all but 2 tablespoons of water and place in a food processor. Puree. Whisk together the mayonnaise, basil, garlic, and pureed tomatoes. Toss in the pasta. Chill at least 2 hours. Garnish with Parmesan.



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition were WebMD, Real Age - Health Tools and Tips for Living Younger, RecipeSource, and the National Health Observances web sites.