



Wellness Update April 2013

by Susan Hanly - Naturopath

Cholesterol Management

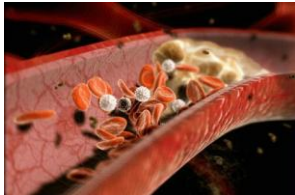
The Low-Down On Cholesterol

It seems that everyone is talking about cholesterol these days, but do you really know what it is? What can you do to maintain healthy cholesterol levels? Cholesterol is a type of fat that is carried around in the blood. It performs useful functions in the body and is a major building block for cells and many of your hormones, including oestrogen, testosterone and cortisol. Cholesterol is also important for the synthesis of vitamin D, as well as bile acids which aid in the digestion of fats. Our bodies manufacture cholesterol but it can also be found in foods containing saturated fats. It is important to check your cholesterol levels regularly. Even though our bodies need some cholesterol, having high cholesterol can be bad for your health and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The Good vs. The Bad Cholesterol

HDL and LDL are letters that you may have seen before on a blood test, and your Practitioner will be interested in reviewing these to monitor your health. But what do they mean? Your total cholesterol is made up of two types of cholesterol, often referred to as "good" and "bad" cholesterol.

- High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) is essentially the "good" form of cholesterol. It carries cholesterol from the tissues to the liver to be broken down and excreted. HDL helps to decrease cardiovascular risk.
- Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) is often referred to as the "bad" form of cholesterol. High levels of LDL cholesterol can leave cholesterol deposits in the



arteries, increasing the risk of the coronary artery disease known as atherosclerosis.

- It is important to keep your HDL:LDL ratio in balance; aim towards

having higher levels of the "good" and lower levels of the "bad" cholesterol.

Natural Support For Cholesterol

As your Practitioner I can assess your cholesterol levels and your risk of cardiovascular disease. Being aware of your current state of health gives you the

opportunity to take positive steps to improve your health right now. Staying healthy in the present will reduce your risk of cardiovascular and chronic disease in the future.

I can prescribe some key nutrients specifically to help you maintain healthy cholesterol levels and cardiovascular health:

- Polymethoxyflavones: Also known as PMFs, these natural antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds found in citrus peel assist in maintaining healthy cholesterol levels. Research has shown that nobiletin and tangeretin, the phytochemicals found in PMFs, may assist in lowering LDL levels by reducing synthesis and increasing the clearance of LDL cholesterol.
- Tocotrienols: Tocotrienols are members of the vitamin E family. These antioxidants also increase the clearance of LDL cholesterol and reduce the body's production of LDL.
- Krill oil: The oil from the crustacean, krill, has been shown to be beneficial for cholesterol balance, particularly by supporting HDL levels.
- Fish oil: 2 g to 4 g of combined EPA/DHA has been shown to decrease triglyceride levels and is beneficial for heart health.

Six Tips For Optimal Cardiovascular Performance

Take on these tips for eating and living to support healthy cholesterol and cardiovascular health:

- Follow the Mediterranean diet. People eating this diet rich in essential nutrients and antioxidants have the lowest rates of cardiovascular disease in the world.
- Reduce saturated fats by choosing lean meats. Eating too much saturated fat may increase your weight and cholesterol levels.
- Eliminate detrimental trans fats found in many fast foods, fried foods and packaged baked goods.
- Cut down on sugary refined carbohydrates and processed food. These foods often contain 'hidden sugars' that can be converted to fat when supply is high.
- Weight loss. If you are overweight, losing extra weight will help to lose the risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease. Your Practitioner can

KU-RING-GAI NATUROPATHIC CLINIC

ABN 65 003 012 771

Email: suehanly@iinet.net.au

Suite 2, 793-795 Pacific Highway Gordon. 2072 (enter from Park Ave) Ph. 9499 4244 Fax. 9498 5603
Herbal Medicine, Clinical Nutrition, Hemaview (Live Blood Analysis), Cellular Health Analysis, Weight Management



recommend a clinically-proven weight loss program and targeted supplements to assist healthy weight management.

- Get moving towards a healthy lifestyle. Exercise improves cardiovascular and overall health and supports your “good” cholesterol levels. Move away from unhealthy habits such as smoking and excessive alcohol intake as they increase your cardiovascular risk.

Getting Your Ratios Right For Life

Achieving and maintaining healthy cholesterol levels can be simple with my support. With the help of natural medicines and by following some key dietary and lifestyle recommendations, you can effectively manage your cholesterol levels. Talk to your Practitioner today to get started on your journey towards improved cardiovascular health.

Healthy Heart Helps Healthy Head

Something that most people are not aware of is that to look after your cardiovascular health is also going to look after your head health – by that I mean cognitive function. Good health of the vessels in your heart and general circulation will mean good health of the vessels in your brain. It is extremely important to take care of your brain now so that as an older person you can maintain good mental capacity. Cognitive impairment or dementia – Alzheimers Disease being the most well known of the dementias doesn't start in your 80's, although this is when it may begin to become obvious, it takes years to develop.



Dementia can affect memory, language, attention, judgement, planning, behaviour, mood and personality. Mild cognitive impairment does not significantly impair daily activities, but often represents an earlier stage of cognitive decline. There is no cure for the common forms of cognitive decline and dementia. A cure may only be achieved by prevention, because the diseases that cause dementia begin many years before symptoms become apparent and gradually damage the brain until it can no longer function normally. Intervening early to stop or slow disease progression, before cognitive impairment emerges, offers the best hope of preventing dementia. At this point in time all drug trials have proved unsuccessful.

Alzheimers Australia is encouraging people between 40 and 60 years old to actively address diet and lifestyle as prevention. You can go to their brain health website: – <http://www.yourbrainmatters.org.au>

There are several strategies that I would consider important in helping to prevent dementia. As you would imagine the brain is an incredibly dynamic and highly functioning organ and as such can be easily damaged or functionally disrupted.

Increased levels of heavy metals such as aluminium, mercury, cadmium, lead etc have shown to contribute to cognitive decline. Heavy metals can be assessed by hair analysis testing. I can arrange this for you. If you have an increased load of heavy metals on board then these need to be removed by chelation therapy. Heavy metal toxicity can cause a variety of other problems as well.

Many people have a genetic polymorphism (slight genetic abnormality) called MTHFR. It is related to the metabolism of folic acid. If you are positive for this gene change then you will be unable to metabolise folic acid (vitamin B9) and this will have negative effects on cardiovascular disease and is known to impair cognitive function. If you are positive for the MTHFR polymorphism it simply means you need to take an activated or different form of folic acid e.g. folinic acid to get around the problem. This can be tested via a saliva test which I can arrange for you.

Free radical or oxidative damage will have long term negative effects on brain function and inflammation. Antioxidants are very important for protecting brains. An excellent antioxidant which is helpful in protecting against dementia and cancer is Curcumin – the active component in Turmeric. I have some very good supplements which may be of benefit in helping prevent cognitive decline.

Looking after your cardiovascular health will also help look after your brain health. Don't wait, start now and call me to make an appointment to have these tests. It may make the difference between cognition and confusion in older age!!!

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