

Beware of This One Destructive Factor if You Want to Avoid Heart Disease

The information contained in this blog has been drawn from *The Great Cholesterol Myth*. I highly recommend this book. It is down-to-earth and easy to read.

Clarifying the Cholesterol Story

- LDL – A: Cholesterol is a buoyant, fluffy molecule that does no harm whatsoever as long as it is not damaged by oxidation (a process caused by free radicals that enables cholesterol to form plaque).
- LDL – B: is a small, hard, dense molecule that promotes atherosclerosis. Blood tests today can measure the number of LDL – A and LDL – B.

An even better test is probably the calcium scan:

- The Power of the Calcium Scan and CAC Score
- The Best Heart Attack Predictor: Coronary Artery Calcium (CAC) Scoring (Begin at 43 minutes)
- Note also this comment

First Cause: Chronic inflammation is the real cause of heart disease.

Chronic inflammation is a component of virtually every single degenerative condition, including Alzheimer's, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, cancer, neurodegenerative diseases, chronic lower respiratory disease, influenza and pneumonia, chronic liver and kidney diseases, and, most especially, heart disease.

To discover if you have chronic inflammation, calculate the ratio of your triglycerides to your HDL. If, for example, your

triglycerides are 150 mg/dL and your HDL is 50 mg/dL, you have a ratio of 3:1 (150:50). If your triglycerides are 100 mg/dL and your HDL is 50 mg/dL, you have a ratio of 2:1 (100:50), which is excellent for maintaining health.

In one study out of Harvard printed in *Circulation*, a journal published by the American Heart Association, those who had the highest triglyceride-to-HDL ratios had a whopping 16 times the risk of developing heart disease as those with the lowest ratios. So let's explore the root cause of inflammation.

C-Reactive Protein is a simple blood test that measures levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a powerful inflammatory marker.

Second Cause: Oxidation is the initiator of inflammation.

Oxidation is the rusting of the body from within through the damage of free radicals. Free radicals are molecules that have lost one of their paired electrons and are thus unbalanced, doing damage to other cells they touch as they seek to grab electrons from them. Antioxidants such as pycnogenol, resveratrol, Protandim, Vitamin C and water infused with H₂ gas remove free radicals.

Third Cause: Sugar is the real demon in the diet, not fat.

Fifty years ago, two scientists were bribed by the sugar industry to throw the blame on fat rather than sugar as the main causative agent in heart disease. Our grandparents ate five pounds of sugar a year. Today we eat over 150 pounds of sugar a year, and it produces insulin resistance, ultimately making us fat. All those fat cells are loaded with chemicals that contribute mightily to inflammation!

"How do I know if I have insulin resistance?" Good question. Though there are blood tests to determine this, there's also a nice, simple, low-tech way to do it. Stand in front of a wall and walk toward it. If your belly touches the wall before the rest of your body, there's an excellent chance that you're

insulin resistant. Men with waist sizes of 40 inches or more are almost certainly insulin resistant, as are women with waist sizes of 35 inches or more.

To avoid this problem, we have replaced sugar with stevia, monk fruit and erythritol. (Incidentally, we have also replaced table salt with sea salt because of the many health benefits.)

Fourth Cause: Living with chronic stress.

When you add chronic stress to inflammation, oxidation and sugar, you are ripe for a heart attack. It is noteworthy that stress is the only item on all three lists we have studied so far for causes of heart disease (Traditional list, innovative list and biblically-stated cause—fear).

In the story about The Roseto Effect, it was shown people who overcame chronic stress by experiencing strong community, connections and spirituality cut their heart attacks to a fraction of the national average.

In another study, the population of gray tree frogs in many American lakes was being decimated. The general consensus was that this was due to the use of a common pesticide, carbaryl (known by the brand name Sevin), which was found in large quantities in all of the lakes where frogs were dying. Rick Relyea, Ph.D., a biochemical researcher from the University of Pittsburgh, discovered the pesticide carbaryl was actually pretty innocuous to frogs in the unnaturally tranquil setting of a lab. But most tree frogs don't live in a lab; they live in the wild, where there are constant dangers from predators.

Expose a stressed frog to the pesticide, and you've got a dead frog. The combination of stress hormones and pesticides was lethal. Perhaps the key ingredient to heart problems is chronic stress.

Since I have taken the free online ENNEAGRAM profile, and

determined that my personality is that of "The Protective Challenger," I realize I need to spend some focused time on learning to relax, have fun, play and celebrate, which I shall do over the coming months. Some key words which describe my personality type are "outspoken, direct, opinionated, bold, decisive and tough." Well, I can sure see stress in that list of words. So one of the things the Lord has had me do is get my autoharp out of the closet and begin again worshipping in the Spirit with it, as I did 35 years ago. I will now focus on de-stressing!

This article originally appeared at .