

Cholesterol or Inflammation: Which is More Detrimental for Your Heart?

More people are telling me that their cholesterol numbers are too high for their age when they're only around 180 to 190. This used to be considered very good. And as a person ages it used to be that the number went up to something around 220.

Now the number has gone down to somewhere between 160 and 170. This is very suspect considering the facts. It's time to know the truth about cholesterol.

Some time ago, I wrote an article on fats and oils where I discussed the cholesterol myth. Heart surgeon Dwight Lundell, M.D. confirmed that information.

He states, "The recommendations regarding lowering cholesterol are no longer scientifically or morally defensible. The discovery a few years ago that inflammation in the artery wall is the real cause of heart disease is slowly leading to a paradigm shift in how heart disease and other chronic ailments will be treated."

He adds that the long-established dietary recommendations of the no-fat or low-fat diet have created epidemics of heart disease, obesity, and diabetes, the consequences of which dwarf any historical plague in terms of mortality, human suffering and dire economic consequences.

Though 25 percent of the population takes expensive statin medications and despite the fact we have reduced the fat content of our diets, more Americans will die this year of heart disease than ever before. And statistics show that as many people die of heart disease that have low cholesterol as those that have high cholesterol. We need to ask why we keep

using this protocol when it isn't working.

The True Cause of Heart Disease

Simply stated, without inflammation being present in the body, there is no way that cholesterol will accumulate in the walls of the blood vessels and cause heart disease and strokes. Without inflammation, cholesterol will move freely throughout the body as nature intended. It is inflammation that causes cholesterol to become trapped and collect in blood vessels.

Inflammation is your body's natural defense response to a foreign invaders such as a bacteria, toxins or viruses. The cycle of inflammation protects your body from these bacterial and viral invaders. However, if you chronically expose your body to injury by toxins or foods the human body was never designed to process, chronic inflammation occurs. Chronic inflammation is as harmful as acute inflammation is beneficial.

Though few people deliberately expose themselves repeatedly to foods or other substances that are known to cause injury to the body, with the exception of smoking, many people do this by simply following the recommended mainstream diet that is low in animal fat and high in polyunsaturated fats and refined carbohydrates. This causes repeated injury to our blood vessels and creates chronic inflammation leading to heart disease, stroke, diabetes and obesity.

The biggest culprits of chronic inflammation include an overload of simple, highly processed carbohydrates (sugar, flour and all the products made from them) and the excess consumption of omega-6 vegetable oils that include soybean, corn safflower, and sunflower that are found in many processed foods, salad dressings, mayonnaise, fried foods, and snack foods. Also, smoking causes inflammation and injury to blood vessels.

Dr. Lundell says, "Take a moment to visualize rubbing a stiff brush repeatedly over soft skin until it becomes quite red and nearly bleeding. If you kept this up several times a day, every day for years, what do you think would happen? If you could tolerate the pain, you would have a bleeding, swollen, infected area that became worse with each repeated injury. This is a good way to visualize the inflammatory process that could be going on in your body right now."

Dr. Lundell adds, "Regardless of where the inflammatory process occurs, externally or internally, it is the same. I have peered inside thousands upon thousands of arteries. A diseased artery looks as if someone took a brush and scrubbed repeatedly against its wall. (This happens because) several times a day, every day, the foods we eat create small injuries compounding into more injuries, causing the body to respond continuously and appropriately with inflammation."

Foods loaded with sugars, simple carbohydrates that turn to sugar easily, and foods processed with omega-6 oils for long shelf life have been the mainstay of the American diet for six decades. These foods have been slowly poisoning everyone by creating an inflammatory condition.

How does eating a simple sweet roll, a dish of pasta, or a bowl of ice cream create a cascade of inflammation to injure your arteries and make you sick? Blood sugar is controlled in a very narrow range. Extra sugar molecules attach to a variety of proteins that injure the blood vessel wall. This repeated injury to the blood vessel wall sets off inflammation. When you spike your blood sugar level several times a day, every day, it is exactly like taking sandpaper to the inside of your delicate blood vessels.

While you may not be able to see it, or feel it, the damage is still occurring. Dr. Lundell said he saw it in over 5,000 surgical patients spanning 25 years of practice, who all shared one common denominator – inflammation in their

arteries.

When you look at sweet rolls, donuts, or commercially baked cookies, those innocent looking goodies not only contains sugars, they are baked in one of the many omega-6 oils such as soybean, corn, sunflower, or safflower oil. Chips and fries are soaked in omega-6 oil; processed foods are manufactured with omega-6 oils for longer shelf life. While omega-6's are essential—they are part of every cell membrane controlling what goes in and out of the cell—they should be in their whole state as found in seeds or vegetables and must be in the correct balance of 3:1 omega-6 and omega-3 fats.

If the balance shifts by consuming excessive amounts of omega-6, the cell membrane produces chemicals called cytokines that directly cause inflammation. The American diet has a significant imbalance of these two fats. The ratio of imbalance ranges from 15:1 to as high as 30:1 in favor of omega-6. That's a tremendous amount of cytokines causing inflammation.

There is no escaping the fact that the more we consume prepared and processed foods, the more we trip the inflammation switch little by little each day. The human body cannot process, nor was it designed to consume, foods packed with sugars and soaked in omega-6 oils.

What can you do to turn off inflammation in your body? Eat whole foods in their natural state. Choose only carbohydrates that are complex such as fruits and vegetables. Juice every day and include ginger root—an anti-inflammatory ingredient. Omit sugar and all sweets; use only stevia as a sweetener. And, use only virgin, organic coconut oil, olive oil or butter from grass-fed beef.

Animal fats contain less than 20 percent omega-6 and are much less likely to cause inflammation than the supposedly healthy oils labeled polyunsaturated. The "science" that saturated fat

alone causes heart disease doesn't exist. The science that saturated fat raises blood cholesterol is also very weak.

"Since we now know that cholesterol is not the cause of heart disease, the concern about saturated fat is even more absurd today," Dr. Lundell said.

The cholesterol theory that led to the no-fat, low-fat recommendations in turn created the very foods now causing an epidemic of inflammation. Mainstream medicine made a terrible mistake when it advised people to avoid saturated fat in favor of foods high in omega-6 fats. We now have an epidemic of arterial inflammation leading to heart disease, obesity, and other silent killers.

By eliminating inflammatory foods, juicing fresh vegetables and including ginger root, and adding essential nutrients from fresh unprocessed food, you will reverse years of damage in your arteries and throughout your body from consuming the typical American diet.

Cherie Calbom is the author of 21 books, including her latest best-seller "The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies," and "Juicing for Life," with 2 million copies sold. Known as The Juice Lady for her work with juicing and health, her juice and diet therapy and cleansing programs have been popular for more than two decades. She holds a Master of Science degree in whole foods nutrition from Bastyr University. She has practiced as a clinical nutritionist at St. Luke Medical Center, Bellevue, Wash., and as a celebrity nutritionist for George Foreman and Richard Simmons. She and her husband conduct Wellness Juice & Raw Foods Cleansing Retreats throughout the year. For more information and to sign up for her free newsletter, go to

For the original article, visit .