



NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2012

This Month's Theme

We're partway through the holidays, and all of the indulgences that go along with this. New Year's is quickly approaching, and with it, resolutions to get healthy! With this in mind, I'm going to focus on cholesterol and cardiovascular (heart) health, in an effort to clear up some misunderstandings and give you some guidance!

New Developments

- **REIKI!** Starting in January 2012, we will once again have Reiki treatments available at the WIHC. Vijanti (Vi) Ramlogan Murphy of "Reiki with Vi" will be available at the WIHC for Chi and Prana work. Vi will be available Friday mornings from 9-12, and will be available by appointment at other times. Please call us at 705-474-2727 to book your session today. You can check out www.reikiwithvi.ca for more information.
- Don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook at "Wallace Integrated Health Centre" for all the latest updates on what's happening at the WIHC!

Upcoming Events

Dr. Kelly will be hosting another "healthy & active" information session on Monday, January 16th at 7:00 p.m. Healthy & Active is a unique program designed to facilitate weight loss, boost metabolism, balance blood sugar, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, correct hormonal imbalances and increase energy and well-being. This program is ideal for diabetics, those who need to lose weight, and anyone who just wants to be their best! It is based on an extensive blood analysis and personal health history, and provides an individualized food list and menu plan for YOU. This is a great way to start the New Year. There is no fee for the information session, but seating is limited, so please call 705-474-2727 today to reserve your seat.

Articles - Let's Talk about Cholesterol – by Kelly Wallace, N.D.

I'm sure all of you know at least one person who has been told that they have high cholesterol and they need to be on medication to bring it down. People are often reluctant to take these medications, and call me to ask questions. Here's my take on the issue.

Cholesterol is a form of fat that is used to form cell membranes in the body, to manufacture hormones including cortisol, testosterone, estrogen, progesterone and vitamin D. It is also used in the brain, and is important for neurological function and memory. So, cholesterol is actually very important in the body, and it isn't a good thing for it to be too low.

On your lab report, cholesterol is divided into the "good" HDL and the "bad" LDL. To simplify things, LDL carries cholesterol and fats around the body, depositing them where they are needed, and sometimes where they aren't (like your arteries). HDL picks up fats and returns them to the liver.

Elevated LDL cholesterol has been identified as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD). But guess what? It is only 1 of more than 200 risk factors, and it's not even the most important one! The truth is that more than 50% of the people who die from heart attacks have low or normal cholesterol levels. One reason why cholesterol is such a big target among doctors is that it is easy to change with medications. Smoking, diabetes, obesity and physical inactivity are also major risk factors for CVD, but it's much easier to put someone on a pill than to help them quit smoking, lose weight or increase their physical fitness.

So let's talk about these cholesterol medications. The most common type of cholesterol medication is the statin family (Lipitor, Crestor, Zocor, Mevacor...). These medications act to lower LDL. There is some evidence that in people who have had a heart attack these medications can help prevent a second one, but in several big studies, statins don't seem to reduce the incidence of a first heart attack or stroke. On the down side, statins can cause liver damage, muscle breakdown, nerve damage, impaired mental function and a deficiency of CoQ10, a nutrient used to make energy and power the muscles.

Generally everyone is concerned about lowering their LDL. But more important is raising your HDL. Studies are starting to show us that people with elevated HDL's don't have heart attacks, no matter what their LDL is (this is especially true of women).

The other thing that makes cholesterol more confusing is that the reference ranges of what is "normal" and "desirable" keep changing. There are people who contend that this is due to the pharmaceutical lobby pushing to have the acceptable levels decreased so that more people will "need" their drugs. This may or may not be true, I haven't investigated it myself. What I have seen myself are that the reference ranges have decreased over the past few years, to levels that I believe are too low for optimal health. In my opinion, cholesterol is not the problem. Truly elevated cholesterol is a sign that something is out of balance in your body, and an indication to you to make some changes in your life.

So what can you do? Well, although only 20% of the cholesterol in our body comes from our diet (the other 80% is made in your liver), that is a fair bit, AND what you put in your mouth can also alter the manufacture of cholesterol in your body. Not only that, but the same lifestyle changes that decrease LDL and elevate HDL, also decrease other CVD risk factors. When you start to exercise, not only does your HDL come up, you tend to lose weight, and your blood pressure comes down too! Dietary changes, exercise, nutrients such as fish oils, B-vitamins and plant sterols can all help to decrease your risk of CVD. If you believe you're eating well and getting enough exercise, and you're still worried about CVD, talk to an N.D.

Health Tip

Eat oats! That's right, oatmeal and oatbran are excellent sources of soluble fibre and trace nutrients. They help to eliminate cholesterol and other undesired substances from the body, control weight and support healthy digestion. Of course, real oats, the kind that actually take a moment to prepare, are preferable to the sweetened, flavoured "instant" oatmeal packages.

Must Read

"What the Drug Companies Won't Tell You, and your Doctor Doesn't Know" by Dr. Michael Murray, N.D.

A bit harsh, but full of great information about taking charge of your own health, by a leader in the field of Naturopathic Medicine.