

Abstract

Image Awareness Wellness Institute Healthletter

Cholesterol (Part 1)

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A genetic condition called familial hypercholesterolemia is associated with the development of severe atherosclerosis and development of heart disease early in life. This genetic disorder led the medical community to the conclusion that heart disease was caused by high cholesterol. The inclusion of individuals with this inherited disorder in cholesterol studies of pharmaceutical agents to lower cholesterol results in a very slightly reduced risk of heart disease although deaths from all causes is not always reduced.

The one form of cholesterol we should worry about is oxidized cholesterol. Animal studies have unequivocally shown that oxidized cholesterol is 500 times more atherogenic than cholesterol which has not been oxidized. Virtually every study which has implicated cholesterol as a factor in heart disease has used oxidized cholesterol such as that found in powdered eggs and aged cheeses.

Studies of saturated fats have not distinguished between unnatural highly processed trans fats and natural saturated fats. Trans fats alone are believed to cause as much as one out of every five coronary heart disease events each year.

Studies on cholesterol have also used herbivores such as rabbits. These animals do not have the ability to decrease internal synthesis of cholesterol when it is ingested with their food. Studies with herbivores do not have a strong applicability to carnivores and omnivores which have a feedback mechanism.

Cholesterol is such an important molecule that humans and other mammals have the machinery to manufacture it. The weak step in cholesterol synthesis is the enzyme HMG-CoA reductase. Pharmaceutical medications, statin drugs, to lower cholesterol levels target this step. Statin medications are the most profitable of all prescription drugs with sales in the billions of dollars.

Natural regulators of cholesterol metabolism in adequate magnesium intake, the vitamin E complex (especially the tocotrienols), and adequate water intake. Antioxidant deficiencies can allow cholesterol in the body to oxidize increasing the risk of developing heart disease. Important antioxidants include vitamin E, vitamin C, and carotenoids.

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