Facts and Myths about Cholesterol

"In Framingham, Massachusetts, the more saturated fat one ate, the more cholesterol one ate, the more calories one ate, the lower people's serum cholesterol. . . we found that the people who ate the most cholesterol, ate the most saturated fat, and ate the most calories, weighed the least and were the most physically active." *William Castelli, Director*, *The Framingham Study* (*Archives of Internal Medicine,* Jul 1992, 152:(7):1371-1372)

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Framingham Study: 30 YEARS LATER: Investigators looked at the participants after 30 years and found that lower cholesterol equaled a greater risk of death. “For each 1% mg/dl drop of cholesterol there was an 11 percent increase in coronary and total mortality.” *(JAMA* 1987;257:2176-2180)

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“The anti-fat, anti-cholesterol fad is not just foolish and futile. . . It also carries some risk. Scientific reports linking cholesterol and heart attacks have touched off a new food fad among do-it-yourself Americans. But dieters who believe they can cut down on their blood cholesterol without medical supervision are in for a rude awakening. It can’t be done. It could even be dangerous to try.” From a general news release issued by the AMA on October 12, 1962.

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“Those individuals with a low serum cholesterol maintained over a 20-year period will have the worst outlook for all-cause morality.” (*Lancet*, 2001 358:351-55).

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GREATER DEATHS AT LOW CHOLESTEROL: Many studies have shown that all-cause deaths, especially deaths from cancer, are higher for individuals with cholesterol levels lower than 180. (*Circulation* 1992 86:3)

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“In studies conducted over 20 years, the Harvard School of Public Health showed that total fat intake bore no significant relation to Coronary Artery Disease risk. . . Four epidemiological studies have shown no evidence that men who eat less fat live longer or have fewer myocardial infarctions (MIs)” (*Circulation* 2003; 107:10).

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WOMEN AND ELDERLY: In women and in the elderly, no appreciable difference in CHD rate for any level of cholesterol. ***In fact, for women of all ages and the elderly, higher cholesterol is associated with a longer lifespan*. (***Circulation* 86, 1026-1029, 1992)

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The French Paradox: The French, who have the highest saturated fat intake of the entire European Union, have the lowest rates of heart disease (European CVD statistics, 2005).

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"The diet-heart hypothesis has been repeatedly shown to be wrong, and yet, for complicated reasons of pride, profit and prejudice, the hypothesis continues to be exploited by scientists, fund-raising enterprises, food companies and even governmental agencies. The public is being deceived by the greatest health scam of the century." *George Mann, M.D.,* *Formerly Associate Director, the Framingham Project*

"Whatever causes CHD, it is not primarily a high intake of saturated fatty acids." — *Michael Gurr, Ph.D., Author of definitive lipid biochemistry textbook*

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OXIDIZED CHOLESTEROL: Cholesterol in natural foods does not cause heart disease—it merely spares the body from making its own cholesterol. However, altered, oxidized cholesterol from powdered milk and eggs, and from animal fats used for deep frying, may initiate the build up of pathogenic plaque. Powdered milk is often added to 1% and 2% milk and other lowfat dairy products. (*Food and Nutrition News* 62(2), 7-10, March/April 1990)

Necessary Uses of Cholesterol

**KEY ROLE**: Makes cells waterproof so there can be a different chemistry inside and outside the cell.

**HEALING**: Nature's healing substance--repairs wounds, including tears in arteries.

**STRUCTURE TO CELLS**: Gives structural integrity or proper "stiffness" to cells, like cellulose in plants. High intake of plant oils (polyunsaturated fatty acids) can lead to “leaky” cells.

**VITAMIN D**: Precursor to Vitamin D, needed for healthy bones, calcium metabolism, reproduction, normal growth, eyesight, nervous system.

**BILE SALTS**: Precursor to bile salts, needed for fat digestion.

**HORMONES**: Precursor to vital sex hormones and protective steroids.

**ANTIOXIDANT**: Powerful anti-oxidant, protects against free radicals.

**BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM**: Essential for development and function of brain and nervous system; needed for proper functioning of serotonin receptors in the brain.

**RELEASED WITH STRESS**: Mental or physical stress, including pregnancy, injury, illness

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Reading References

“What If It’s All Been A Big, Fat Lie?” New York Times, July 2002, by Gary Taubes

“What Makes Us Fat And What To Do About It” by Gary Taubes, www.garytaubes.com

“The Cholesterol Myths”, “Fat And Cholesterol Are Good For You” By Uffe Ravnskov

“The Great Cholesterol Con” By Malcolm Kendrick

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