



# Don't Let Your Heart Fail You

## Facts and Myths About Preventing Heart Disease

According to Dr. Bruce Halstead, a world-famous medical doctor and medical research scientist, it takes twenty years for current medical research to filter down through the medical system and become the standard practice of medical doctors. This certainly seems true with heart disease prevention where decades old misconceptions abound.

Here are some widely believed concepts that are out-of-date with current medical research. Many people believe that eating red meat, butter, eggs and other foods high in saturated fats and cholesterol will increase their risk of heart disease. This is because of the false belief that hardening of the arteries (arteriosclerosis) is caused by high cholesterol. Most people also believe that eating too much salt will cause high blood pressure.

In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing* we'll explain why these widely-known "facts" aren't accurate and discuss what more recent research is saying about heart disease. We'll also talk about some of the drugs commonly prescribed to reduce the risk of heart disease and their more natural alternatives. But, before we begin correcting some of these misconceptions, let's briefly talk about some of things you can do naturally to support and protect the health of your heart.

### Supporting Your Heart

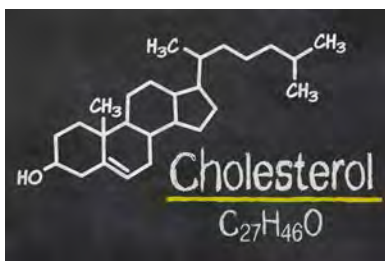
Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in old age, so it's a good idea for people in their 50s and 60s to think about doing some simple things to reduce their risk of heart disease. Regular exercise is one. Another is a good multi-vitamin, because nutritional deficiencies, especially deficiencies of the vitamins D3, E, K2 and C and the mineral magnesium, are a common root cause of cardiovascular problems.

You can also use some basic food herbs that are completely safe for long term use. **Hawthorn** is the first one to consider. It strengthens the heart muscle, helps to reduce blood pressure and improve peripheral circulation. It works very well with **ginkgo extract**, which protects the brain and aids circulation. **Garlic** is another circulatory herb that can be taken long term. It helps reduce blood pressure and prevent hardening of the arteries. It works well with **capsicum**, which also balances blood pressure and improves peripheral circulation. You can use these herbs as singles or better yet, take them as part of a **Cardiac Tonic Formula**. Now that you know some of the basics of heart disease prevention it is time to correct some of the harmful misinformation.

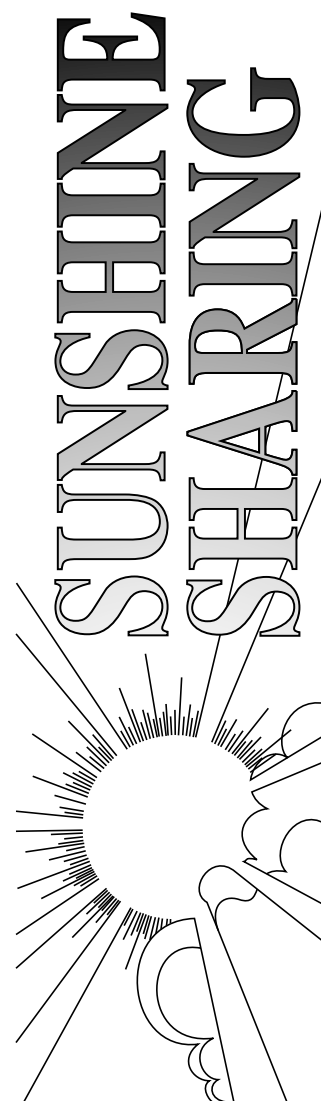
### Cholesterol Isn't the Problem

For decades cholesterol has been blamed as a major cause of heart disease and premature death, leading most people to believe that cholesterol is bad (or the LDL form is, at least) and that the lower your cholesterol, the healthier you will be. This is based on an oversimplification of research and manipulated data. In reality, cholesterol is not the villain medicine makes it out to be.

It is true that cholesterol is a large part of the material that forms arterial plaque, but cholesterol doesn't randomly deposit in blood vessels. Plaques tend to form in high pressure arteries and more recent research suggests it may be a response to inflammation or some kind of infection or damage to an artery. The plaque acts like a bandage helping to protect the compromised



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Your guide to better health the natural way.

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Managing Editor/Writer: Steven Horne  
Editor: David Horne  
Associate Editors: Carolyn Hughes, Leslie Lechner

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blood vessel. Research also suggests that in order for cholesterol to adhere to the arteries, it must first be oxidized. So, oxidation or free radical damage and inflammation is really the underlying cause of hardening of the arteries.

### Your Body Needs Cholesterol

As for cholesterol, your body needs it. True, it can be out of balance, but high cholesterol is just a symptom of other imbalances which may include exposure to environmental toxins, infection, low thyroid or poor gallbladder function. Furthermore, there are numerous problems associated with low cholesterol levels (below 175 mg/DL). So, reducing your cholesterol too much is also bad.



Fats and water don't mix, so the body can't transport fats through the blood stream without something to make them water soluble. That substance is cholesterol, which is manufactured by the liver as it is needed. LDL cholesterol, the so-called "bad" cholesterol, carries fatty acids to the tissues, while HDL, the "good" cholesterol, carries them back to the liver. The liver adjusts the amount of all types of cholesterol according to the needs of the body.

Between 60% to 80% of the body's cholesterol is used for making bile salts, which help you digest and absorb fats and fat soluble vitamins. This is why low fat diets don't help to reduce cholesterol. People with higher intake of naturally fatty foods may actually have lower cholesterol, because the liver makes more bile to help digest these fats, which lowers blood cholesterol levels.

Cholesterol is also the base material for the steroidal hormones produced in the adrenal and reproductive glands. Without it, the body cannot make DHEA, pregnenolone, progesterone, testosterone, estrogen, aldosterone or cortisol. This is why low cholesterol levels (less than 175 mg/DL) can result in low energy, difficulty controlling inflammation and reduced sex drive and fertility. These are just two of the many things for which the body needs cholesterol.

### The Dangers of Low Cholesterol

Medical practitioners usually cite the Framingham study launched in 1948 as justification for lowering cholesterol to reduce heart disease. This study followed 5,000 residents of Framingham, MA for 16 years and concluded that lower levels of cholesterol reduced your risk of heart disease.



Since then, many studies have proven this hypothesis to be flawed. Here are just a few of the many sources that challenge the high cholesterol-heart disease connection.

An article in the 1987 *Journal of the*

*American Medical Association*, reported that a 30-year follow-up of the Framingham study showed no correlation between high cholesterol and mortality. But, it did show a correlation between low cholesterol and mortality.<sup>1</sup>

A Japanese study found that as cholesterol levels went up, death rates from coronary heart disease went down.<sup>2</sup> Another article in the 2002 *Journal of Cardiac Failure* regarding an analysis of 1,134 patients with heart disease showed that low cholesterol was associated with worse outcomes in heart failure patients and impaired survival rates. It also showed that elevated cholesterol was not associated with hypertension, diabetes or coronary heart disease.<sup>3</sup>

### Statin Drugs and Natural Alternatives

The belief that lowering cholesterol will reduce your risk of heart disease prompts the sale of billions of dollars of cholesterol-lowering drugs, primarily statins. Statin drugs work by blocking the liver pathways that manufacture cholesterol. Unfortunately, blocking this pathway also blocks production of Co-enzyme Q10 (Co-Q10), an important substance that reduces cardiovascular inflammation and aids energy production in muscles, including the heart. Anyone who is taking a statin drug should supplement with **Co-Q10**.



Statin drugs do slightly lower the risk of heart attacks, but they increase the risk of death from other causes, resulting in no real benefit for increased health or life-span. Since they also have numerous side effects such as muscle weakness, fatigue, headaches, difficulty concentrating, erectile dysfunction and peripheral neuropathy it seems wise to explore other options for reducing heart attack risk.

Rather than focusing on lowering cholesterol, you can focus on preventing cholesterol from oxidizing. You can also work to reduce the inflammation that causes cholesterol to adhere to arteries. An extract of bergamot fruit has been shown to prevent the oxidation of cholesterol, while helping to lower LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and raise HDL cholesterol to create a more healthy lipid balance.

Bergamot fruit extract works synergistically with other antioxidants such as turmeric, green tea extract, grape seed extract and mangosteen fruit. There are also herbs and nutrients that help to reduce cholesterol naturally, such as garlic, **niacin** and **red yeast rice**. Look for a **Cholesterol Balancing Blend** containing any of the above ingredients. If you take red yeast rice, however, be sure to take Co-Q10 as it blocks the same liver pathways that statins affect.

Another helpful strategy for reducing cholesterol is to stimulate bile flow with herbs like artichoke leaves, Oregon grape, barberry and yellow dock. Any good **Blood Purifying Formula** with herbs

1. Anderson, K.M., "Cholesterol and Mortality," 30-year follow-up on the Framingham study, JAMA 1987, Apr 24;257(16):2176-80
2. Okayama, A., Marmot MG Int. J Epidemiol Dec, 1993
3. Horwich, T.B., "Low Serum Total Cholesterol is Associated with Marked Increase in Mortality in Advanced Heart Failure," Journal of Cardiac Failure, Aug. 8, 2002 (4):216-214

like these will stimulate more bile production, which will lower cholesterol. This works even better if you also take a **Fiber Supplement** with herbs like psyllium, apple pectin and oatbran, which will bind the cholesterol in the intestines so it can't be reabsorbed. This strategy also helps to get rid of toxins that can cause cardiovascular inflammation, so it is very beneficial for overall health.



## Fat Facts and Myths

Along with cholesterol, saturated fats have been demonized as causing heart disease, causing people to avoid foods like red meat, whole milk, butter and coconut oil in favor of polyunsaturated vegetable oils. Like the cholesterol issue, this misrepresents

the science. The medium chain saturated fatty acids in butter and coconut oil are actually good for your heart, which prefers them as fuel. Plus, the natural fats found in real foods like meat, whole milk dairy products, eggs, nuts and avocados are always found in company with fat soluble vitamins, which are very important for preventing heart disease.

That's where fat soluble vitamins come into play. Fat soluble vitamins like A, D3, E and K2 are important antioxidants that protect fats and fatty substances like cholesterol from oxidative damage. Unfortunately, most Americans simply do not get adequate amounts of these critical vitamins. Lowering cholesterol levels doesn't prevent the remaining cholesterol from being oxidized, nor does it prevent inflammation or damage to the arteries.

Refined vegetable oils have been stripped of these important fat soluble vitamins, as well as traces of minerals and other nutrients. These oils are also high in omega-6 fatty acids and low in omega-3 fatty acids. This imbalance increases inflammation, which is the real cause of heart disease. To make matters worse, these processed oils also contain trans fats, which are especially bad for your cardiovascular system.

The bottom line is, don't be afraid of the natural fats in whole foods. Instead, avoid vegetable oils (especially partially hydrogenated oils), margarine and shortening. Also avoid processed foods that contain these ingredients.

## The Unjustified War on Salt

Another popular myth is that too much salt will cause blood pressure problems. The truth is that some people's blood pressure will rise and other people's blood pressure will drop after eating a lot of salt. Most of the time it does neither. A study in the 2006 *American Journal of Medicine* which looked at the reported daily sodium intakes of 78 million Americans and their risk of dying from heart disease over the course of 14 years, didn't show salt consumption to be harmful. In fact, the more salt people ate, the less likely they were to die of heart disease.



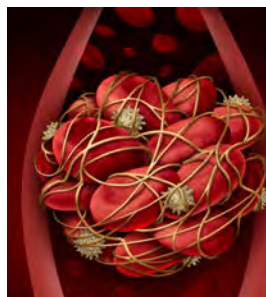
It is likely that using a natural salt that has trace minerals in it, which means it will not be white, but rather have some color, is probably good for you. It only becomes problematic when you aren't drinking enough water (dehydration will make your blood pressure rise) or you're not consuming enough potassium. If salt does seem to aggravate your blood pressure, try supplementing your diet with **potassium**.

## The Real Bad Guys: Sugar and Refined Carbs

If you need a food to demonize as a major contributing factor in cardiovascular disease, point the finger at refined carbohydrates like sugar, white flour and high fructose corn syrup. These foods elevate blood sugar and insulin levels, which increases inflammation throughout the body. The excess sugars from these foods are converted to fat, which raises triglyceride levels and causes imbalances in LDL and HDL cholesterol. In the bloodstream, sugar sticks to proteins and creates toxic, damaging molecules called Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs). This same process also damages or oxidizes LDL, contributing to inflammation and arterial plaque.

Diabetes, obesity and heart disease are strongly interrelated due to the damaging effects that refined carbohydrates have on the body. So, if you want to adopt a real heart-healthy diet, replace refined sugar, high fructose corn syrup and white flour with natural sweeteners and whole grains. Use butter, coconut oil and other natural fats instead of vegetable oils, margarine and shortening. Also eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and high quality proteins.

## Blood Thinners and Anticoagulants



Blood thinners or anticoagulants are also widely prescribed to reduce the risk of heart disease. Keeping clots from forming in the cardiovascular system is important to help prevent heart attacks, strokes and other circulatory disorders.

An infarction is a blockage in an artery that stops the flow of blood to tissues. An embolism is something that lodges in a blood vessel causing infarction and the most common form of embolism is a blood clot. When a blood clot forms in the cardiovascular system and lodges in a blood vessel to produce an infarction, the result is ischemia, the death of tissues from a lack of blood supply. When this happens in the brain it is called a stroke.

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## Additional Help and Information

For more information about how to prevent heart disease and natural alternatives to heart medications contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

*The Great Cholesterol Myth* by Jonny Bowden and Stephen Sinatra

*Fat and Cholesterol are GOOD for you!* by Uffe Ravnskov

*Ignore the Awkward: How the Cholesterol Myths are Kept Alive* by Uffe Ravnskov

*The Doctor's Heart Cure* by Al Sears

*Reverse Heart Disease Now* by Stephen T. Sinatra and James C. Roberts

*The High Blood Pressure Hoax* by Sherry A. Rogers

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/its-time-to-end-the-war-on-salt/>



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# AskMara.com & Energy Wellness Products

Mara Gerke

9898 N 200 E, Decatur, IN 46733

**Phone:** 800-728-2425

**Website:** <http://www.askmara.com/>

**Email:** askmara@gmail.com



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When it happens in the heart, it is called a myocardial infarction, more commonly known as a heart attack.

Blood clots can form in large veins, a problem known as deep vein thrombosis or DVT. These clots most often occur in the legs. When they break off and travel through the blood stream they can enter arteries and block blood flow into other organs, such as the lungs, a condition known as pulmonary embolism.

When a person is at risk for clots forming in the circulatory system, blood thinners or anticoagulant medications are used to reduce this risk. The primary side effect of these medications is increased risk of bleeding, such as bleeding gums, heavy menstrual bleeding or bleeding from the lungs or bowel, which is why the dose has to be carefully monitored.

There are herbs and supplements that can be used to reduce the risk of blood clotting. These natural remedies have less risk of side effects, but when a person is already on blood thinners they should be careful about using these supplements. One should never abruptly discontinue blood thinners or add large doses of blood thinning herbs or nutrients. The best approach is to start taking moderate doses of the natural blood thinners a week or two prior to being checked by your doctor. If the supplements work, your blood will be too thin and you will need a lower dose of the blood thinning medications. This can be done over the course of several months to gradually wean off the drugs and start using the supplements.

Herbs with anticoagulant or blood thinning properties include alfalfa, **butcher's broom**, capsicum, garlic and ginkgo. Nutrients that are helpful include **vitamin E**, chlorophyll and **nattokinase** (fungal enzymes). If you are concerned about blood clotting, try taking some **liquid chlorophyll** in your water daily and taking a good **Circulatory Stimulant Formula** containing these herbs.

## Lowering Blood Pressure Naturally

High blood pressure or hypertension greatly increases your risk of more serious cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks and strokes. This is partly because it increases the risk of blood clots forming in the cardiovascular system. Hypertension also increases



the risk of kidney failure. Clearly, helping blood pressure to come down is important in reducing cardiovascular risk, but most of the time, drugs are only treating the symptom and not fixing the cause, which is why a person has to take them continually.

If you're on high blood pressure medications, it is extremely important not to abruptly discontinue them. Stopping blood pressure medications can result in extreme spikes in blood pressure and rebound heart attacks have been reported. To reduce your blood pressure naturally, start by exercising, managing stress, losing weight and discontinue the use of caffeine and tobacco. You can also start taking blood pressure reducing supplements while continually monitoring your blood pressure.

As your blood pressure begins to come down, you can work with your doctor to adjust the dosage. Over time you can gradually discontinue the medication as your blood pressure normalizes.

Many cases of high blood pressure are simply a lack of nutrients needed to maintain the arterial lining or endothelium, which produces nitric oxide to dilate blood vessels and reduce pressure. One nutrient that may be very helpful for reducing blood pressure is **l-arginine**, which is the precursor to nitric oxide. Studies suggest that doses of five grams or more of l-arginine may be helpful in reducing blood pressure.

Other helpful nutrients include the fat soluble vitamins A, D3, E and K2, **vitamin C**, **Co-Q10**, **magnesium** and **omega-3** essential fatty acids. Herbs that are helpful in reducing blood pressure include linden, capsicum, garlic, **olive leaf** and **lobelia**.

The best way to get the benefits of these nutrients is to find a **Blood Pressure Reducing** or **Cardiovascular Tonic Formula** with multiple ingredients, rather than try to take individual herbs or nutrients. This will help to reduce your blood pressure, reduce your risk of clotting, reduce inflammation and even help to reverse arteriosclerosis.