



Lipid Management

Research has shown that there is a strong link between high blood cholesterol levels, coronary artery heart disease, and stroke. Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that travels through the bloodstream. Most of the cholesterol in your body is made by the liver and the rest is gotten by eating dietary fat. When you eat foods high in animal fat you are also eating foods rich in cholesterol.

The higher your cholesterol is, the more likely some of the cholesterol will build up in the walls of your arteries. This cholesterol, called the LDL (low density lipoprotein), if elevated can lead to the build up of plaque in the artery walls which narrows the arteries and decreases the blood flow. This may lead to angina (chest pain), heart attack or stroke. On the other hand, HDL (High Density Lipoprotein) cholesterol helps free some of the LDL cholesterol from the walls of the arteries and returns it to the bloodstream. This is why HDL is known as the "good cholesterol".

Understanding the risk factors for coronary artery disease and your power to modify these risks can lead to a more heart healthy lifestyle and a decreased risk for heart disease.

Risk factors include:

- family history of heart disease
- age
- high blood pressure
- diabetes
- smoking
- a low level of good cholesterol (HDL) - less than 35
- obesity

Some tips for managing your cholesterol and maintaining a heart healthy lifestyle include:

- Maintaining optimal body weight (if you weigh too much your body stores fat and cholesterol)
- Get regular aerobic exercise (eg. walking, jogging, or swimming) that can help raise your HDL
- *Change your diet to eat:*
 - Less fat calories (especially saturated fat)
 - Less foods high in cholesterol such as eggs, fatty meats, dairy products, organ meats, and some shellfish. Eat more fish and poultry.
 - Eat more fiber and whole grain complex carbohydrates.
 - Limit simple carbohydrates (such as sugars and starches)
 - Limit alcohol intake

Reduce your other risks for heart disease by:

- Stopping smoking (smoking lowers your HDL)
- Control high blood pressure and diabetes through diet, weight loss, taking your medication, and regular check ups with your doctor
- Reduce your stress level

For more information about our Lipid Clinic call our office at (847) 336-1600.