

Cholesterol

In the last few years the concern about cholesterol has dramatically increased. You probably know it can be bad, but do you know why it is bad? All cholesterol is not bad. In fact some cholesterol is necessary for life. So what exactly is cholesterol? Cholesterol is a fatty wax like substance found in the body's cells. Our bodies use it to build cell members into producing important hormones. Even if you are cholesterol free, your liver manufactures cholesterol to keep your body supplied. If you have too much cholesterol or unsaturated fat in your diet, it may cause elevated blood cholesterol. Excessive cholesterol clogs your arteries. This is called arteriosclerosis and it impairs blood flow. If your artery is completely blocked it can cause a heart attack or a stroke. Cholesterol comes in two major forms, low density lipids (LDL) and high density lipids (HDL). LDL is known as the bad cholesterol and deposits cholesterol on the walls of arteries. This is the first step towards having a heart attack or stroke. HDL removes excessive build-up on the artery wall and transports it back to the liver for removal from your body. By eating less saturated fat and cholesterol you can reduce your risk of life threatening heart attacks.

There are two ways to control cholesterol before it becomes a problem. You



Stay Healthy

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can control cholesterol by diet, but you can also control cholesterol by a modest exercise and weight loss program. Both of these can save your life. There are no easy answers or magic solutions. Even cholesterol medications have recently come under debate. The purpose for taking a cholesterol medication is to lower your LDL levels so you will have less of a chance for heart attack or stroke. However, some recent studies have started to come out that show that people taking cholesterol medications do lower their cholesterol levels, but they may not in fact be significantly reducing their risks of heart attacks and strokes. Thus, there is no miracle pill to substitute for eating better and getting regular exercise. So

while modern medical sciences debate the recent studies, remember prevention is the best solution. You should make healthier choices now and avoid the problem to begin with. If you already have high cholesterol do not give up hope. Work with your doctor to work out a plan for you and stick with it for your family and yourself.