

Cholesterol is Not a Villain

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Cholesterol is not the villain it is made out to be. It is a constituent much needed in a myriad of roles in the body. It is so important to the body that even if you didn't eat any cholesterol at all, your liver would manufacture enough for your body's needs.

The medical/pharmaceutical model has us quite ill-informed and frightened about cholesterol. We are making poor choices as a result, paying the price with our health and well-being. Let us talk about cholesterol in a way that might instead soothe you and bring you into friendship with it.

About 80% of the body's cholesterol is produced by the liver; the intestines also producing small amounts when necessary. The body manufactures between 1000-2000mg of cholesterol per day. The less you eat, the more your body produces to meet its needs.

Cholesterol is an essential component of *every cell* in the human body. It forms 50% of the nervous system! It is crucial for the proper growth and development of our brain as well as the impulses that our nerves send.

Cholesterol is required in our skin, serving as a barrier to prevent water and other fluids from inappropriately entering through the skin. It also acts to convert the sunlight that hits the skin into Vitamin D. Without Vitamin D calcium does not reach our bones, so cholesterol is important in calcium distribution and bone structure.

Cholesterol is a foundational component of our hormones. From the production of hormones that regulate energy (glucocorticoids) to our sex hormones (estrogen, progesterone and testosterone), cholesterol is at the root. Without cholesterol our hormones do not exist; fatigue one symptom of its deficiency.

The bad rap about cholesterol began back with animal studies in the early 1900's. It has been the suggested link to coronary heart disease despite human studies that show no correlation of dietary cholesterol intake to blood cholesterol level. Lo-fat, no-fat, fake fat and reduced cholesterol diets have been the prescription. The result of this way of eating over the last century has been higher cholesterol levels while still an increase in heart disease. Eating a fat-free/cholesterol free diet has obviously not been the answer.

The biggest offender according to this model has been the egg. I see my client's faces go ashen when I recommend a return to eggs. Although cholesterol rich, egg yolks also contain the lecithin and choline helpful in moving the cholesterol through our bloodstream.

Eggs from pasture fed hens have the optimum nutrient profile for cholesterol processing. I invite you to go to my website (www.thejoyofhealth.com) to read about the benefits of pasture fed hen eggs.

The real culprit in the cholesterol issue is the intake of junk foods and sugar. Both of these food 'groups' play havoc on the liver and on the intestines. The liver is where cholesterol is conjugated, where it is taken apart and put back together into components needed by the body. If our liver is overwhelmed by toxins or sugar load, it cannot do the job appropriately and our cholesterol levels can sky rocket as a result.

Our intestines are where excess cholesterol should be taking a taxi ride out of the body via fiber. A diet of junk food and sugar has little to no fiber content. This is why oatmeal is effective in reducing cholesterol. It is often the only fiber containing food some people are willing to consume.

Whenever I am addressing cholesterol issues I look to the liver and the large intestine as the underlying cause. I assist my clients in cleaning up their diet, reducing the pasta (carb) load and re-educate them about eggs and saturated fats. Cholesterol levels reduce as a result. People want to blame it on heredity, but it is often the family pattern of eating that underlies the issue.

Next week...the proper ratios of different cholesterol factors in your body and how to improve their balance for health.