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Cholesterol Month

Did you know that September is “National Cholesterol Education month”?

This is a great time to take charge of your heart health and look at ways to lower cholesterol!

1 out of every 2 men and 1 out of every 3 women will develop heart disease sometime in their life. Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the United States and about 1.25 million heart attacks occur each year in the United States.

Research has clearly shown that lowering cholesterol can reduce the risk of developing heart disease. Whether you have heart disease already or want to prevent it, you can reduce your risk for having a heart attack by lowering your cholesterol level.

The American Heart Association says it's important to pay attention to exercise, and a proper diet that is low on foods that contain cholesterol and saturated fats. That means eating better and improving lifestyle. Speak to your health care providers to make sure your cholesterol is being monitored and find out how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you stay healthy.

Reduce Risk with TCM

Acupuncture and herbal medicine are both used to address high cholesterol.

Acupuncture can be used to treat many of the health conditions that are known to drastically increase the risk of heart disease and high cholesterol.

Here are a few of the risk factors that can be addressed with acupuncture:

- * Smoking
- * High Blood Pressure
- * Excess weight

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Pomegranate Juice



Pomegranate Juice Fights Heart Disease, Study Says

In China, the pomegranate fruit symbolizes longevity. Now there is scientific evidence for the fruit's restorative powers.

Scientists have tested the juice in mice and found that it combats hardening of the arteries (atherogenesis) and related diseases, such as heart attacks and strokes.

According to results published in the August 2006 issue of Atherosclerosis, subjects who drank 180 ml (6 oz.) of pomegranate juice per day for three months experienced a reduced risk for atherosclerosis, a condition that leads to arterial wall thickening and hardening.

* Diabetes

Herbal Medicine

Several Chinese herbs and herbal formulas are used to lower cholesterol levels. Shan Zha (Fructus Crataegi) also known as Hawthorn berry, have been shown to reduce LDL cholesterol levels and lower blood pressure.

Most herbal medicines are a blend of herbs specifically chosen for each individual . Please talk to your practitioner about which herbal formulas and supplements for high cholesterol and heart health are right for you.

Causes of High Cholesterol

Three nutrients in your diet make LDL ("bad" cholesterol) levels rise:

* Saturated fat, a type of fat found mostly in foods that come from animals;

* Trans fat, found mostly in foods made with hydrogenated oils and fats such as stick margarine, crackers, and French fries; and

* Cholesterol, which comes only from animal products.

Learn how to read a food label - Choose foods that are low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol.

Overweight

Excess weight tends to increase your LDL level. Also, it typically raises triglycerides, a fatty substance in the blood and in food and lowers HDL. Losing the extra pounds may help lower your LSL and triglycerides, while raising your HDL.

Physical inactivity

Being physically inactive contributes to overweight and can raise LDL and lower HDL. Regular physical activity can raise HDL and lower triglycerides, and can help you lose weight and, in that way, help lower your LDL.

Participate in physical activity of moderate intensity—like brisk walking—for at least 30 minutes on most, and preferably all, days of the week. No time? Break the 30 minutes into three, 10-minute segments during the day.

Smoking

Don't smoke. If you do smoke, contact call our office to discuss ways in which acupuncture can help you quit.

Scientists have long known about health benefits of pomegranates. The latest studies are showing that the juice limits the genetic tendency toward hardening of the arteries.

"We have established that polyphenols [antioxidant chemicals] and other natural compounds contained in the pomegranate juice may retard atherogenesis," said Claudio Napoli, a professor of medicine and clinical pathology at the University of Naples, Italy. "The protective effects of pomegranate juice were higher than previously assumed."

Green Tea

Green Tea

There have been some intriguing studies indicating that green tea can be extremely effective in the fight against high cholesterol. Specifically, the beverage reduces "bad" cholesterol and boosts "good" cholesterol, improving an individuals overall cholesterol profile.

In addition, green tea appears to lower overall cholesterol levels, helping to reduce ones risk of developing heart disease.

Similarly, green tea enhances cardiovascular health by improving the consistency of platelets in the blood.

Researchers have also found that green tea appears to protect against oxygen-induced damage to bad cholesterol. Drinking green tea also seems to enhance cardiovascular health by improving the consistency of platelets in the blood.

Your Cholesterol Level

You can have high cholesterol and not realize it. Most of the 65 million Americans with high cholesterol have no symptoms. So it's important to have your blood cholesterol levels checked. All adults age 20 and older should have their cholesterol levels checked at least once every 5 years. If you have an elevated cholesterol, you'll need to have it tested more often.

Setting your Goal

The main goal in treating high cholesterol is to lower your LDL level. Studies have proven that lowering LDL can prevent heart attacks and reduce deaths from heart disease in both men and women.

Total Cholesterol

Less than 200 mg/dL - Desirable
200-239 mg/dL - Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above - High

LDL Cholesterol

Less than 100 mg/dL - Optimal (ideal)
100-129 mg/dL - Near optimal/ above optimal
130-159 mg/dL - Borderline high
160-189 mg/dL - High
190 mg/dL and above - Very high

HDL Cholesterol

Less than 40 mg/dL Major heart disease risk factor
60 mg/dL and above - Gives some protection against heart disease

Healthy Diet Tips

Health Tips for High Cholesterol

* Increase your intake of fiber-rich foods such as oatmeal, wholegrains, fruits, vegetables and legumes (beans, soybeans).

* Soy products help lower cholesterol levels due to their isoflavone content.

* Include garlic, onions, avocados, salmon, almonds and walnuts in your diet.

* Omega-3 oils such as flax seed oil and fish oil help lower cholesterol.

* Copper and chromium are minerals that have been shown to lower cholesterol levels.

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