



January, 2010

Weber-Morgan Wellness Newsletter

Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of our Community



Resolve to know your numbers!

Total cholesterol:
Optimal= < 200
High= > 240

LDL:
Optimal= < 100
High= > 160

HDL:
Optimal= >60
Low= < 40

Triglycerides:
Normal= < 150
High= > 200

Get your cholesterol checked!

Cholesterol: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Cholesterol is quite the buzzword these days. It seems that everyone is talking about “good” and “bad” cholesterol, but what does that mean? Why is it so important?

Cholesterol is not a bad thing, really. It’s a waxy substance that our bodies use to produce hormones, build cells, and much more. Problems arise when cholesterol levels get too high as excess can build up in the arteries and harden, forming a condition referred to as **atherosclerosis**. This can block blood flow and potentially lead to a heart attack or a stroke.

Cholesterol comes from two sources. The body produces 75% of the cholesterol in your blood stream in the liver. The other 25% comes from foods we eat. Foods that are high in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol can all increase the “bad” and “ugly” cholesterol levels.

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly:

HDL is often referred to as the “good” cholesterol. HDL carries cholesterol away from the body to be metabolized in the liver. Therefore, high levels of HDL

protect against heart disease while low levels increase your risk.

LDL is the “bad” cholesterol that, in high amounts, is deposited in artery walls causing a waxy buildup called plaque. When this plaque hardens, the artery is less able to do its job.

Triglyceride (aka the “ugly”) is a form of fat produced by the body. High levels can be due to overweight/ obesity, physical inactivity, cigarette smoking, excess alcohol consumption and a diet very high in carbohydrates. People with high triglycerides often have high total cholesterol levels, high LDL levels and low HDL levels- a triple whammy!

All people aged 20 or older should have their cholesterol tested at least once every five years. If it’s been a while, (or never) resolve to get checked in 2008. Be sure to talk with your doctor about what your results mean!

If your cholesterol is high, diet and exercise can help tremendously. Your doctor may also recommend medication. Together, you and your doctor can find a plan that will work for you!

The Right Drug for Your Bug

Are there bottles of unused antibiotics in your home? If so, ask yourself why.

Many people stop taking their antibiotics when they begin to feel better, leaving pills left over. Usually, your doctor has you take antibiotics for a few days past the point when your symptoms disappear. This ensures that all bacteria have been killed and the infection is completely gone. If you follow your doctor’s orders, there should be no left over pills.

Antibiotics are not one-size fits all. The pills a doctor prescribes for a sinus infection will not work for a urinary tract infection, and vice versa. Furthermore, antibiotics will only work on *bacterial* infections, not viral infections such as the cold or the flu.

Using antibiotics inappropriately can lead to an increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. So the next time you really need an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, it may not work. Only your doctor can decide what antibiotic, if any, will work for what’s making you sick.

The best thing you can do for viral infections is to prevent them. Proper hand washing can do a lot to prevent the spread of colds and flu, as can getting a yearly flu shot. Never take antibiotics for a cold or the flu.

So “Get Smart”-to learn more visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/GetSmart/>

Did you know?

More than 37 percent of the adult U.S. population has blood cholesterol levels greater than 240, which is considered high risk.

