



## *February EHP Newsletter*

The New Year has started and a lot of us are already trying very hard to stay true to our New Year's resolutions. Since this is the month is all about love I only thought it fit that this month's topic should be pertaining to heart health. I will be giving you information that could just save the life of a loved one or maybe even your own.

So, you go for that lovely yearly physical and the doctor has ordered some routine blood work, and you look at the slip and see "total cholesterol". While we all might know what cholesterol is, do you know your cholesterol number? Do you know what can help lower your cholesterol numbers or what can make it worse? First of all, cholesterol is a waxy, fat like substance that is made in the liver and it also can be found in many foods that are consumed. High cholesterol is a major risk factor for both heart disease and stroke. In fact, in Pennsylvania (according to the PA Dept of Health) heart disease is the leading cause of death. In our cholesterol numbers we may look at the LDL (low density lipoproteins, or the "bad" cholesterol), and HDL (high density lipoproteins, or the "good" cholesterol). These two numbers are very much affected by the other. Quite often if your LDL is high your HDL is low, however, if you lower your LDL your HDL should in turn start to rise. So what should your cholesterol numbers be? Your total cholesterol should be less than 200 mg/dL, your LDL less than 100 mg/dL, and your HDL greater than 40 mg/dL. There are a lot of contributing factors for each individual's cholesterol numbers. Genetics is a huge and undeniable factor, eating a diet high in saturated fats, and being overweight, all can play a role in our cholesterol. No matter what the contributing factors there is a lot we can do to keep our numbers in check. Regular exercise of just 30 minutes a day and making changes in our diet can make a big difference in decreasing our cholesterol numbers.

## *Fun Food Facts!!!*

- Oranges contain cholesterol fighting fiber, pectin, as well as potassium. A medium orange avg 62 calories with 3 grams of fiber.
- Oatmeal aides in lowering LDL (“bad” cholesterol)
- Edamame (green soybeans) decrease triglyceride levels. A ½ cup of edamame is equal to 4 slices of whole wheat bread.
- Salmon “the superman” of heart health is high in omega three’s which helps to decrease artery wall inflammation.
- 1 glass a day of red wine for a women and 1-2 for a man will aide in boosting HDL and helps to protect artery walls. ( Contains Reseveratrol a powerful antioxidant)
- Walnuts (a helping of 1.5 oz per day) will decrease cholesterol and are packed with omega three’s and good monosaturated fats.
- Carrots are a great source of soluble fiber.

### Heart Attack Symptoms

We have all seen heart attack scenes in the movies or on television. The dramatic grabbing of the left arm, piercing chest pain, and seeing a white light, this is the vision most people have of an impending heart attack. Unfortunately, not all heart attack symptoms are the same, especially for women. Even though most men experience the squeezing chest pain in a study of women who experienced a heart attack a staggering 43% of 515 women suffered **no** acute chest pain.

Common symptoms in women are: Shortness of breath, weakness, nausea, pain that may travel from a shoulder to the jaw, feeling of indigestion, back pain, and unusual fatigue. Common symptoms in men: Shortness of breath, squeezing chest pain, sweating, fainting, and/or unusual fatigue.

With any of these symptoms please call 911. By calling for emergency help they have heart saving medications, oxygen, and the expertise to ensure your chance at remaining alive.

Since we are on the subject of heart health I also thought we should discuss stress. Jokingly at times we all have said; "I am so stressed out!" We may have even sported the tee shirt with the cat pulling his hair out, or the coffee mug with a whimsical saying, but the truth is that stress is a factor to our heart health that we can learn to control. Stress management is about taking charge of your thoughts, emotions, schedule, environment, and the way you deal with problems. Easier said than done right? Wrong! I am going to equip you with information that may be your weapon in the fight in taming stress.

Think of the four A's: Avoid, Alter, Adapt, or Accept.

Avoid any unnecessary stress:

- Learn how to just say "no"
- Avoid people who are toxic and tend to stress you out
- Take control of your environment
- Avoid hot button topics

Alter the situation:

- Don't bottle up your feelings
- Be willing to compromise
- Be more assertive
- Work on better time management

Adapt to the stressor:

- Try to look at the big picture
- Take a more positive approach to a situation
- Adjust your standards
- Keep your focus on the positive things

Accept the things you can not change:

- Don't try to control things that you can not control
- Share your feelings
- When faced with a challenge try to look at it as an opportunity
- Learn to forgive; this will free yourself of negative energy

Since this is the month all about love I thought I would close this newsletter on that same subject-Love. Both being in love and loving someone is good for your emotional and spiritual health. It not only boosts your immune system, it also boosts the neurotransmitters in the brain that are responsible for the good feelings of being well. Love and the need to be loved are fundamental to human survival; this also includes loving yourself!