

THE FOUNDATION HEALTH FORUM

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 • FEBRUARY 2006

SIDESTEP OUR EPIDEMIC OF HEART DISEASE

Dear Health-Conscious Reader,

Welcome to the *WRF Health Forum*. Your first edition focuses on natural strategies you can use to avoid our nation's number one killer – heart disease.

In spite of medical advances, rates of heart disease continue to increase killing more than 950,000 Americans every year. Emergency care has improved, meaning you are more likely to survive your heart attack or stroke. But if you have heart disease, a dependency on prescription drugs has become the norm.

Yet the medications have proven poor substitutes for correcting the cause of this modern epidemic. In fact, they're actually causing other serious health problems. Fortunately, you can avoid both the heart attack risk and the overuse of these toxic medications.

Who's Setting the Cholesterol Standards?

A government appointed panel called the National Cholesterol Education Program, (NCEP), sets the standards your doctor uses to interpret your blood cholesterol level. According to the recently released guidelines by the NCEP, you are a candidate for cholesterol medications if your blood cholesterol is 200 or above. The most common cholesterol drugs are in a group called "statins."

In 2004, doctors in the US wrote 140 million prescriptions for statin drugs.¹ The new guidelines will soon expand that number and doctors will prescribe statin drugs to millions more Americans.

In October 2004, *USA Today* revealed that eight of the nine doctors on the board of the NCEP that sets the



standards for when to use these drugs were making money from the very companies selling cholesterol-lowering drugs. Two of the doctors own stock in the companies that sell statin drugs. Two others went to work for drug companies shortly after working on the guidelines. Another senior NCEP scientist worked as a consultant for ten drug companies and is currently on one of their boards of directors.²

The Costs of Drug Therapy

In large part because of the repeatedly revised and stricter recommendation by the NCEP,

statins have become the most widely prescribed class of drugs in history. They are also the most profitable drugs ever.

One hundred tablets or capsules of the statin drug Zocor will cost you \$350.27. The cost of ingredients for the drug's manufacturer is just \$8.60. That's a mark up of 3,959%.

The most popular statin drug, Lipitor, has become the most profitable drug ever. You will pay \$272.37 for 100 tablets or capsules. This is a mark up of 4,596% over the cost of ingredients, which amount to \$5.80.

Company/ Drug	Retail Cost of 100 pills	Cost of Ingredients	Profit
Pfizer / Lipitor	\$272.37	\$5.80	4,696%
Merck / Zocor	\$350.27	\$8.60	4,072%

In 2004, sales of Lipitor in the United States exceeded \$7.7 billion – \$12 billion worldwide. Total revenues in the United States for statin drugs alone totaled more than \$15.5 billion in 2004. Yet there's more to the story ...

EMPLOYERS RESOURCE

America's Administrative Employer[®]

1301 South Vista Avenue, Suite 200 • Boise, Idaho 83705 • (208) 376-3000 • (800) 574-4668 • www.employersresource.com

Statins can cause a number of very serious side effects. But with the drug companies themselves sponsoring the pre-approval trials, many of the side effects go unreported.

Some of the more common side effects are: liver toxicity, blurred vision, memory impairment, inflammation, fatigue, depression, joint aches, muscle pain, weakness and loss of libido.

One of the rarely discussed, but potentially lethal, side effects of statin drugs is a condition known as *rhabdomyolysis*. This occurs when the drug causes smooth muscle cells to burst, dumping their contents into the bloodstream. This can overwhelm the kidneys as they work to clear the debris leading to kidney failure and death.

The FDA reports that this side effect of statins killed 81 people on record. *USA Today* reported that, "statins have killed and injured more people than the government has acknowledged."³

Bayer pulled its popular statin drug Baycol from the market after 31 people died from kidney failure. Yet the trials of Baycol – sponsored by Bayer – reported no risk of death.⁴ In trials of AstraZeneca's latest statin, Crestor, test results showed an alarmingly high number of cases of rhabdomyolysis. Crestor produced a risk 6.2 times higher than *all other statins combined*.⁴

Yet, despite the fatalities caused by Baycol and Crestor's trial data showing an unusually high risk of this same side-effect, the FDA approved Crestor. AstraZeneca released Crestor in August, 2003. Shortly after hitting the market, Crestor caused an additional seven cases of rhabdomyolysis and nine cases of kidney damage.

In addition to this risk, statin drugs have another negative effect in 100% of the patients who take them. Statins block the body's production of co-enzyme Q10. CoQ10 is an important energizing nutrient and antioxidant that both protects and nourishes your heart. Ironically, the depletion of CoQ10 from statin drugs actually weakens your heart.

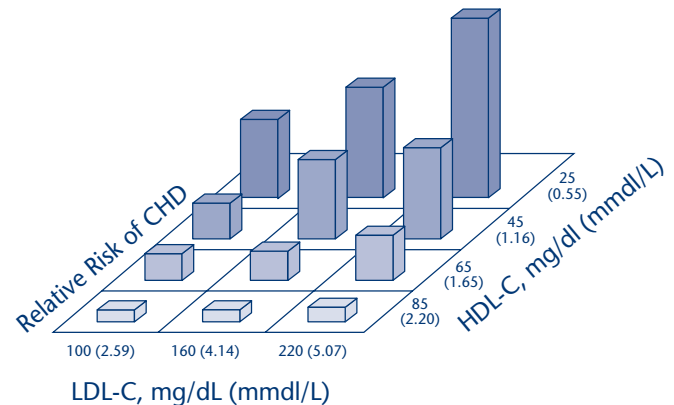
Historic Clinical Study Reveals a Big Surprise

The "gold standard" for data on heart risk is the Framingham study. It has been ongoing for more than 40 years. It is one of the few large studies that has no connection to any drug company. It shows that 75% of people who have heart attacks have normal cholesterol levels.⁵ And, there's more...

To better understand cholesterol's true significance we must look a little deeper. HDL is the "good" cholesterol. It helps to clear your arteries of plaque buildup. LDL is the

"bad" cholesterol. If it becomes oxidized, it clogs your arteries and leads to heart disease.

The Framingham study shows that good HDL levels reduce risk of heart disease regardless of your LDL levels.⁶ In fact, if your HDL is high enough, your LDL will have no impact on your heart health. If your HDL is above 85, you are at no greater risk of heart disease if your total cholesterol is 350 than if it's 150!



Look at the graph above. It shows that your risk of heart disease increases as your LDL level rises – when your HDL level is at a low 25 mg/dl.

The highest bar – in the back right of the graph – shows your highest level of risk. Low HDL, (25 mg/dl) combined with high LDL, (220 mg/dl) is a dangerous combination.

Yet the front of the graph shows your lowest risk. When your HDL level is at 85 mg/dl, your risk of heart disease is consistently low – *no matter what your LDL measures*.

In short, your total cholesterol level is just not a reliable predictor of heart disease. *A high HDL level trumps all other cholesterol concerns*. Therefore, raising your HDL level, not lowering your cholesterol should be your highest priority.

Improve Your Cholesterol

Your HDL level is the most important factor in determining your risk of heart disease. You may not find this idea widely promoted. Most doctors rely on clinical studies and press releases sponsored and produced by the major drug companies. And, there is no drug that effectively raises HDL. The primary action of statin drugs is to lower LDL.

We are now finding that boosting HDL does not require toxic drugs. The right form of exercise and a return to your natural diet are the most effective ways. This means that the control of your heart health is flowing from the doctors and drug makers back to you.

Skip Traditional 'Cardio'

Traditional "cardio" has failed to protect us from heart disease. To fully understand this, some explanation is necessary. Nature fashioned your heart to adapt to challenges. In doing so, your heart eliminates unused capacity. If you train your heart to adapt to longer intervals of "cardio," you force your heart to sacrifice strength, power and reserve capacity in favor of efficiency. You can go further with a Volkswagen than a Ferrari.

Yet, strength, power and reserve capacity are exactly what your heart needs most to reverse your risk of heart attack. These assets allow your heart to meet unexpected real world demands as you might encounter them. The only way to build up the strength in your muscles is to physically challenge their power. Your heart is the same. You need to challenge its power, not duration, to make it stronger.

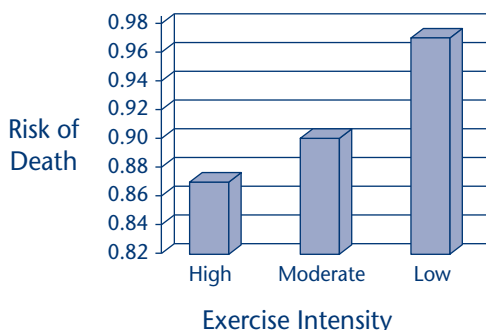
You need a different kind of exercise to improve your heart's strength and adaptability.

Increase Your Heart's Power

The doctors at the Wellness Research Foundation have developed a more effective heart strengthening program. We call it PACE™ for Progressively Accelerating Cardiopulmonary Exertion. It has produced dramatic results in patients.

PACE™ focuses on short bursts of exercise. Break your exercise into short bouts then increase the intensity gradually as your conditioning improves. When you do this, it's more enjoyable, more effective and safer than longer exercise at lower intensity.

Exercise Intensity and Risk of Death



We get a great source of data about heart health from the large Harvard Health Professionals Study. Researchers followed over 7,000 people. They found that the key to exercise is not length or endurance. It's intensity. The more energy a person exerted, the lower their risk of heart disease.⁷

High intensity exercise can also help you live longer. Another Harvard study compared vigorous and light

exercise. Those who performed more vigorous exercise had the lowest risk of death.⁸

The best way to achieve high intensity workouts is to break the activity into short bursts. You can use any activity that will give your heart a bit of a challenge. Our favorites are swimming, biking, running and elliptical machines. We switch among them to keep it fun and lower the chance of "overuse injuries." What you use will depend on your level of fitness. The most important strategy is to increase your challenge gradually over time.

Here are a few other tips to make your exercise more efficient:

- Drink plenty of water before, during and after you exercise.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing made of natural fibers that breathe.
- Skip the deodorant, so your sweat glands are not inhibited.
- Take a hot shower afterwards.

Return to Natural Eating

You'll be happy to know that one of the most important steps in building a strong and resilient heart is simple and enjoyable. Artificial manipulations like counting grams and buying diet products are not necessary. Simply return to your natural eating habits.

By natural don't think of those man-made, processed foods with "natural" printed on the box. These are the most profitable foods and therefore the most marketed. Yet most truly natural foods don't come in packages. Think of the foods we ate traditionally in the past when heart disease was a rare phenomenon. Foods that are high in protein, such as meat, fish and eggs are the most essential for a dynamic heart. Fortunately, these are the foods most people enjoy eating.

It is simpler than you think to choose the right foods to maintain a healthy heart.

- Keep your diet natural.
- Eat "good" fats that occur in nature.
- Avoid refined carbs.
- Eat plenty of lean protein.

When you are shopping for food, think about the process that produced the foods you buy. Stick to foods that look the same as they did in the wild – without processing.

Your body is adaptable, but modern health history has re-taught us a valuable lesson we had forgotten. If you deviate too far from your natural diet, your health and your heart will suffer. Factory-produced foods have only recently appeared in human history. Nature has not designed you for these foods.

Statin Drug Alternatives: Lower Your Cholesterol Safely

Supplement	Description	What It Does	Recommendation
Policosanol	Organic plant alcohol	Lowers "bad" cholesterol without side effects	20mg daily
CoQ10	Nutrient needed by your body's organs to produce energy	Provides energy for the heart, lowers cholesterol and blood pressure	100mg daily
Garlic	Plant, member of the onion and leek family	Lowers cholesterol, blood thinner, dilates blood vessels	1-3 cloves daily
Ginger	Root native to tropic and semi-tropic regions	Lowers and stops oxidation of cholesterol, blood thinner	300mg, twice daily

Finding the Right Supplements

To improve your blood cholesterol, exercise is most important in raising HDL. If you need to lower LDL cholesterol, changing the foods you select and doing effective exercises are still your primary tools. There are also natural and safe supplements that will lower LDL and promote healthy cholesterol profiles without the burdening your health and risking serious side effects. Each of the following supplements are widely available at nutrition stores.

We have seen thousands of patients successfully improve their cholesterol with the natural means you've just read – without resorting to toxic, debilitating drugs.

To Your Good Health,
The medical staff at the Wellness Research Foundation

REFERENCES:

- 1 www.imshealth.com; Leading 20 Therapeutic Classes by Total U.S. Dispensed Prescriptions, 2004.
- 2 Associated Press; *USA Today*; October 16, 2004; (www.usatoday.com)
- 3 Steve Sternberg; *USA Today*; Aug 21, 2001; pg. D.01
- 4 Press Release; Statement of Sidney Wolfe, MD. HRG Publication #1730. (www.publiccitizen.org)
- 5 Castelli WP. Cholesterol and lipids in the risk of coronary artery disease—the Framingham Heart Study. *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*. 1998 July; 4 Suppl A:5A-10A.
- 6 Castiglioni A and Neuman WR. HDL Cholesterol: What Is Its True Clinical Significance? *Emergency Medicine*, January 2003:30-42.
- 7 Lee I, et al. Relative intensity of physical activity and risk of coronary heart disease. *Circulation*. 2003 Mar 4;107(8):1110-6.
- 8 Lee I, et al. Exercise intensity and longevity in men. The Harvard Alumni Health Study. *JAMA*. 1995 Apr 19;273(15):1179-84.