

HEART DISEASE: IT'S NOT THE FAT, IT'S THE SUGAR - *By Tricia Talerico, D.C., MS, Nutr.*



For the past 60 years, conventional medicine has warned us that saturated animal fats cause heart disease and should be restricted in a heart-healthy diet. Even as recent as 2010, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) recommends reducing saturated fat intake to just 10% of your total calorie intake. Absurd! Informed health experts now know that we need from 50-70% good fats for optimal cardiovascular health! A recent editorial in The British Medical Journal (2013), "From the Heart, Saturated Fat is Not the Major Issue," explains that saturated fat consumption does not cause heart disease. They explain further that avoiding saturated fat actually promotes poor health in many ways. Let's explain this in terms that make sense. We go for our yearly check-up with our PCP and he/she sends us for some routine blood work, part of which is the "Lipid Panel." Our blood work comes back clearly showing that our low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol or "bad" cholesterol is extremely elevated. Our doctor tells us to cut down on saturated fats, like those found in animal protein, eggs and cheese. He/she explains that we have 3 months to get that number down or it's on the STATIN for us! Frightened and trusting that the doc has given us the right information, we comply, make changes and come back in 3 months for follow up blood work. Our new blood work shows that we have done a great job in lowering our LDL and doc says see you next year! So, what's the problem? By reducing our saturated fat intake, we have reduced the large, buoyant (type A) LDL particles and not the small, dense (type B) particles. Type B LDL particles are the ones implicated in CVD and respond only to a reduction

in carbohydrate intake or SUGAR!!! Furthermore, we must also understand that the scientific evidence points to trans fats (found in margarine, vegetable shortening and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils) as the real villain in heart disease. These trans fats increase the "type B" LDL particles and also lower the "good cholesterol" or HDL. These fats are also implicated in type 2 diabetes, HBP, insulin resistance, high triglycerides and visceral fat accumulation.

So, it's not the fat, it's the SUGAR! In Dr. Richard Johnson's book, The Sugar Fix, statistics show that at least 50% of Americans consume as much as half a pound or 225 grams of sugar per day. This includes refined sugar in general, processed fructose (HFCS) in particular. Fructose is found in great quantities in processed foods, like cookies, cereals and baked goods. The reason for this is that when fat is removed or reduced, most foods tend to lose their taste. Food companies then compensate by adding fructose, salt and addictive flavorings. Present research shows us that fructose is linked to approximately 78 different diseases and health problems. Why? Upon immediate ingestion of fructose, uric acid levels in the body start to rise, wreaking havoc on your blood pressure, insulin production and kidney function. High levels of uric acid also lead to chronic, low-level inflammation in the body. Not only will we suffer with body/joint pain, increased risk of cancers, but chronically inflamed blood vessels can lead to heart attacks and strokes. To prevent this chronic inflammation/chronic disease, experts now recommend limiting sugar consumption to 5 percent of your daily calories or 25 grams (5 tsp.) per day.

Hopefully, we all have a little more insight into the reason why it's not the FAT, it's the SUGAR. Want to learn more? Join us on March 4th at 11:00 a.m. at Super Foodtown in Ocean for an informative talk on Cardiovascular Disease, Fat and Sugar.

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