



Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue #3

October 2020

Comments from Linda

Fall Semester

Fall semester is well underway and we are coping with the continued virtual format the best we can. We have several students working with us this semester and, not surprisingly, it is taking a bit longer to settle into things they can do in our current setting than would be the case if we were having live sessions. But, we will persevere, and you will see more and more of them the next couple of months. We have several sessions on our Zoom schedule that will showcase what is going on with students, and I encourage you all to support our program and these kids the best you can and make as many of these sessions as you can. Most of them will be on Thursdays, at least for October.

I mentioned a couple of research projects last time, one focusing on sleep habits and a 2nd focusing on COVID coping and social interactions. Those are still coming.

Thinking of you always and knowing I will see you eventually.

Included in this Issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer
MD Director Notes, R Bukkapatnam, MD
Prevention Forward Corner, Javier López, MD
Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucus
Exercise Reminders; Recipe Corner
Universe in a Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN-BC
Bonus! Heart & Its Health Crossword Puzzle
Zoom sessions recap

Hi everybody,

As we enter fall, a few reminders:

-Get your flu shots, protect yourself and others from the flu, which is known to save lives in patients with heart or lung disease. Ideally, please get the high dose, but if you have few comorbidities (age + high BP or cholesterol), please get the regular shot.

-Seek help if you have any new symptoms of chest pain, trouble breathing, localized pains, bleeding, weight loss or fatigue. A lot of cardiac and noncardiac conditions are aggravated because people are too scared to see their doctors due to the pandemic.

-Don't fall: It is getting darker sooner, please reorient yourselves and change positions slower.

-Don't fall for the salt: please watch your sodium intake very carefully, as a lot of this season's dishes call for salt.

-Please continue to exercise, as the weather changes, it is exceptional that Linda and this program gives us a chance to exercise together from the comfort of our home.

Let us remember Larry Fein, a great person, who had one of the toughest battles against heart disease, but fought it with grace till the end. He was always there for the program, showing up for all the classes and socials. Our prayers for his family. As his CWP family, we will never forget him. May his soul rest in peace.

Last but not the least, I am thankful for all of you being there as part of this program.

Thank you , Radhika



From Radhika Nandur Bukkapatnam,
MD, Medical Director, CWP



Javier López, MD
Medical Director, UC Davis
Cardiac Rehab Program

What are high triglycerides?

Triglycerides are fat-like substances in the blood. Everyone has them, but some people have too much of them. This can cause high levels of triglycerides in the blood, also called "high triglycerides." Compared with people who have normal triglycerides, people with high triglycerides can have a higher risk of heart attacks, strokes, and other health problems. People with very high triglycerides can get inflammation in the pancreas. The pancreas is an organ that makes hormones and fluids to help the body break down food. When the pancreas gets inflamed, it can cause serious health problems.

What should my triglyceride level be? Ask your doctor or nurse what your triglyceride level should be. In general, levels are:

- Normal – Less than 150 mg/dL (
- A little bit high – 150 to 499 mg/dL
- Moderately high – 500 to 886 mg/dL
- Very high – Greater than 886 mg/

Am I at higher risk for heart attack or stroke? Yes. Having high triglycerides increases your risk of heart attacks and stroke. But this is just 1 of many things that can increase your risk. You are also at higher risk if you:

- Smoke cigarettes
- Have high blood pressure
- Are overweight
- Have a parent, sister, or brother who got heart disease at a young age.
(Men < 55, women < 65)
- Are a man – Women are at risk too, but men have a higher risk.
- Are older
- Have diabetes – Especially if you cannot control your blood sugar well.

Your doctor can talk to you about your personal risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

Should I take medicine to lower my triglycerides? Not everyone who has high triglycerides needs medicines to lower them. Your doctor will decide if you need medicine. It depends on your age, family history, and other health concerns.

Medicines can include:

- Medicines to lower triglyceride levels – These include [fenofibrate](#) (sample brand names: Antara, Fenoglide), nicotinic acid (sample brand names: Niacor, Niaspan), or fish oil (brand name: Lovaza).
- Statins – These medicines can reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke. They are used to lower cholesterol levels in the body. Many people with high triglycerides also have high cholesterol.

The medicine you take will depend on your triglyceride levels and other factors. If your triglycerides are very high, you might need more than 1 medicine.

Can I lower my triglycerides without medicines? Yes, you might be able to lower high triglycerides if you:

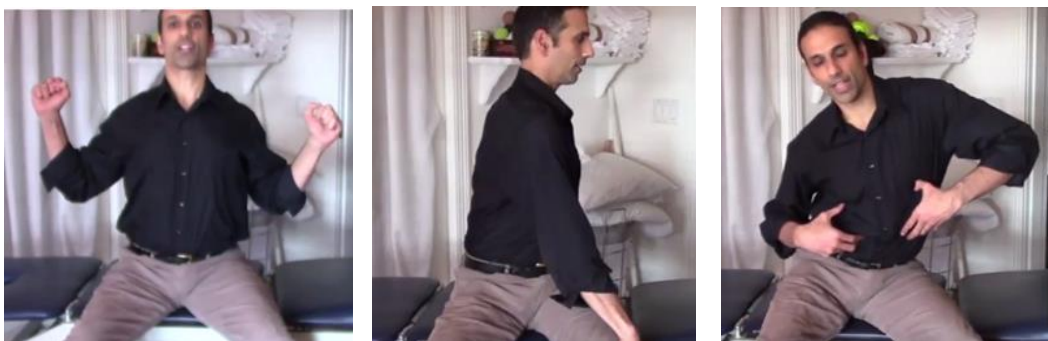
- Lose weight (if you are overweight)
- Get regular exercise
- Avoid foods and drinks with a lot of sugar and carbohydrates – These include white bread, fruit juice, soda, and sweets.
- Avoid red meat, butter, fried foods, cheese, oils, and nuts – This can help if your triglycerides are over 500.
- Limit alcohol – This generally means no more than 2 drinks a day for men, and no more than 1 drink a day for women. If your triglycerides are over 500, ask your doctor or nurse if it is safe to drink alcohol.

Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*

Regular reminder: *Are you getting 30 minutes of cardiovascular activity (walking, biking) most days of the week?? Are you doing some resistance exercise a couple of days a week? Are you doing any stretching? If you aren't exercising with our group, please make sure you are doing things on your own!*

I have been spending some of my extra non-driving time lately reviewing websites that post information about the best exercises. If you followed everything you saw out there, you would be stretching, lifting, doing maneuvers multiple hours of the day. I think what works best is what you have worked out for yourself what works best for you—it's always good to have choices but you are encouraged to adopt the ones that give you results and don't hurt you.

One of the areas I have been reading up on is the thoracic spine. I agree with a PT I saw online, Ed Deboo, who posts youtube clips called "Front Row with Ed." He states "we only go as far as our ribcage takes us." His notions for things to do to maintain integrity in your thoracic spine are 1) shoulder extension, 2) shoulder rotations, and 3) side bending. If you are working out with me, we do lots of things focusing on these aspects. If you are on your own, you might be thinking about what you are doing to help these movements.



Recipe Corner

Our theme this newsletter has been cholesterol management. In a September presentation, Debbie shared tips on eating more soluble fiber (oats, beans, & barley—her favorites!). If you were there, she showed us how to make overnight oats—yum!

Overnight Oats

1/3 cup steel cut oats

2 Tbsp barley

1 1/4 cup water

Combine oats, barley and water in a microwave safe 4-cup bowl. Cover and refrigerate 4 hours or overnight.



Uncover bowl and microwave, uncovered for 3 minutes - stir and then another 2-3 minutes as needed until liquid is absorbed. Then stir in cinnamon, nutmeg, flax seed, honey or maple syrup, berries or whatever you like to have in your oatmeal.



Lower Cholesterol with your Knife & Fork!

By Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

What do oats, beans and barley have to do with living longer, looking better and saving money? Well, everything!! These foods are full of soluble fiber, known to reduce cholesterol. In one study, a near vegetarian diet including foods full of soluble fiber lowered cholesterol almost as much as a statin medication. Soluble

fiber can be found in oats, beans, barley, soy and various fruits and veggies. Its action is to form a gel with food and gastrointestinal (GI) juices and then continue through the GI tract for excretion. It blocks cholesterol from being absorbed.

Soluble fiber has been associated with reducing heart disease risk as a result of cholesterol lowering, helping with weight loss because that gel stays in the stomach longer and helps us to feel more full (hence the ‘looking better’) and improving blood glucose levels (food turns into sugar more slowly).

You are probably familiar with the foods that raise cholesterol: saturated fats, trans fatty acids and cholesterol-rich foods. Saturated fats are found in all meats, whole dairy products and plant products known as tropical oils (coconut and palm kernel oil). Trans fats are usually in processed or packaged foods, as well as fast foods. Cholesterol is in any food that comes from an animal. Cutting out these foods can have a tremendous impact on our cholesterol. But, what if we not only cut out artery-clogging foods, but then added foods that helped lower cholesterol? That is when things really get exciting!!

A whole foods, plant-based diet focuses on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans (all things that can lower cholesterol), while eliminating animal products, dairy foods and processed foods – all the things that can raise our cholesterol. What a perfect match. Oats, beans and barley are particularly good sources of soluble fiber. Most fruits and veggies generally have some amount of soluble fiber but apples and pears are particularly good sources. Imagine the results if you swapped your shredded wheat for oatmeal, rice for barley and used beans for your protein. That is when you ‘save money’ because you won’t need to pay for that statin medication.

Unsure what to do with beans? You can make them from scratch by soaking overnight before cooking or by cooking unsoaked beans in an Instant Pot. Or you can use canned beans – just choose the lower sodium or no salt added variety and rinse for 1 minute. Put beans in soups, stews, on salads, mash or puree into a dip or spread. They are very versatile and you can find so many recipes on the CWP website, or Google.

What to do with barley? Anything that you would do with rice. As a pilaf, in a cold salad, heated up for breakfast like oatmeal, on a salad, in a Buddha bowl or in a soup or stew.

Need some new ideas for oats? Try overnight oats by adding any number of tasty flavorings. Make your oatmeal savory, but adding kale, veggies and nutritional yeast. Blend up the oats to make a flour and mix with an overripe banana and you can make it into a waffle. The possibilities are endless!

So why not give it a try? Swap your usual foods for some soluble fiber-rich foods and see what happens to your cholesterol level. What is the worst thing that can happen? Amazing cholesterol numbers? Better blood sugar? A few pounds lighter? Yummy new foods? Or your doctor may say ‘let’s stop that statin’. Sounds like a great challenge to me.

Practicing Mindfulness

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

Managing Cholesterol Levels with Mindful Eating

As you read this, stop and take a moment to experience what the environment is like around you. Check in with your body: what are you sensing or feeling? Slow down just for a moment: engage your senses and start to observe your breath. Breathe. Just be.

If you stopped just now, and took a moment to check in with your body, you experienced a mindful moment. Mindfulness isn't a replacement for traditional medical treatment, but it can be a useful addition. More research is needed, but what research we have has made it clear that mindfulness has beneficial effects on the entire body, and specifically on the heart and brain. Studies even show that "eating-focused" mindfulness can bring significant changes in weight and in how you approach food. Mindfulness can help you develop a greater awareness of true hunger and the feeling of fullness. It may also help to identify and work through triggers that lead to unnecessary or unhealthy eating.

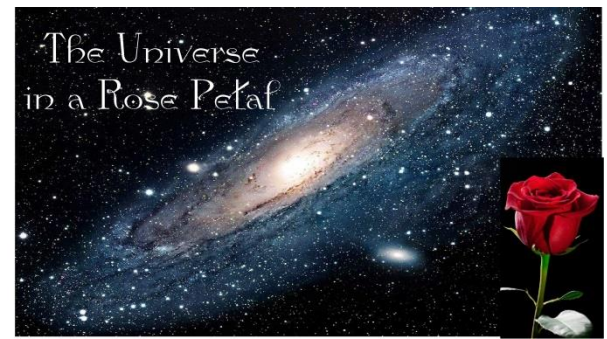
The Cardiovascular Wellness Program (CWP) endorses a heart-healthy, plant-based diet that will help you reach and maintain your cholesterol level goals. Using mindful eating practices will help you follow and enjoy that heart-healthy diet more than you may actually have thought possible! The process is simple: check in with your body when you are hungry and identify what you are truly hungry for. Are you really thirsty? While there aren't a lot of steps to mindful eating, it can be very difficult to remember to implement this new skill. When you have become practiced at it, you will only eat when you are honestly hungry. Mindful practices can keep one from eating out of habit (for example, I have a habit of mindlessly devouring buttered popcorn at the movies). With mindful eating, you will really taste each bite's flavor and texture in your mouth, and you will stop eating when you are full (when I am able to do this, I never eat the entire large tub of popcorn! My stomach signals my brain when it's full, but I need to listen in order to regulate my actions).

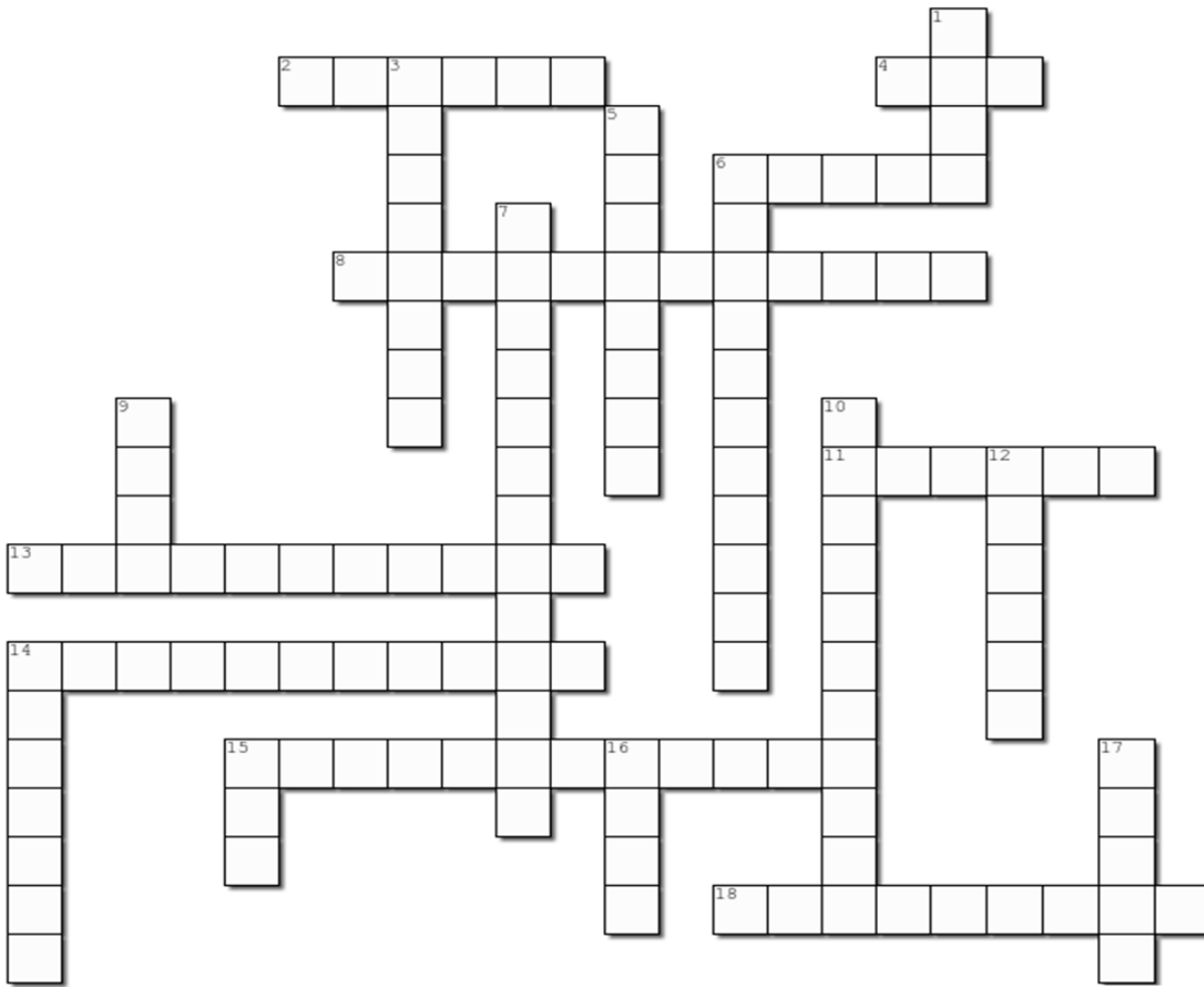
For further mindful eating information, my CWP Stress Management tab handouts #'s 7 and 10 are about mindful eating. I've included a link below for a great infographic from the American Heart Association – Make Every Bite a Meditation. There is also a link for the Center of Mindful Eating, which has resources to learn more about mindful eating and to begin a mindful eating practice. Try several different mindfulness options to see what fits your routine. When your lifestyle includes mindful eating, you will make every meal a practice of moment to moment awareness.

<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/stress-management>

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/mental-health-and-wellbeing/mindful-eating-infographic>

<https://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/page-1863947>





Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

- 2. Michael who authored 'How Not to Die' & provides videos on research education
- 4. Have some daily please
- 6. Something we are currently wearing to maintain safety during the pandemic
- 8. High blood pressure
- 11. Name of valve controlling flow of blood from the heart to the entire body
- 13. Component of physical fitness that enables one to reach and bend easily
- 14. Description of heart rate less than 60 beats per minute
- 15. What to eat to help lower serum cholesterol
- 18. Lower number in a blood pressure reading, coincided with relaxation phase

Down

- 1. Get some of these whenever you can
- 3. How often it would be okay to do some stretching
- 5. Top number in a blood pressure reading; coincides with heart contracting.
- 6. Practice of awareness of present moment
- 7. Main pumping chamber of the heart
- 9. _____ integrity is an important aspect of physical fitness that contributes to posture, balance, and function
- 10. Description of heart rate more than 100 beats per minute
- 12. Recommended number of minutes of cardiovascular exercise to get 5 days a week or more
- 14. Something to strive for in all aspects--physical, mental, emotional, spiritual
- 15. Number of feet encouraged to maintain social distance
- 16. Number of chambers in the heart
- 17. Name for top chambers of the heart

The Heart & Its Health

Test Yourself! Can you answer these clues?

Zoom Sessions Recap (from Linda Paumer)

I am doing my best to keep our educational program going through Zoom meetings and am forever grateful to our team members who are dedicated to helping here. I am also grateful to those of you who regularly attend these sessions; of course you all make it worth continuing.

Coming up in October will be several student-run presentations. Please check into those is possible. And prior sessions have been quite good, including:

Skin health from Shellie Young, a health education from Rx Health Services.

Risk Factors, with Cari Shulkin. She'll be back twice in October—thank you!

Continued nutrition insights from Debbie Lucas, most recently soluble fiber foods for cholesterol lowering. We had a guest dietitian in September also, Margie Junker from UC Davis. Hopefully she will join us again.

Continued health discussions following our road map to health with Dr. Lopez and Dr. Bukkapatnam. We had a wonderful presentation from Radhika about the mind-body connection. Javier keeps us committed to adopting healthy strategies, even in the midst of the pandemic.

Continued mindfulness practice, also called cardiac yoga, with Linda Larsen

Very regular tai chi sessions, led by David Sady. It is really good stuff. We are so blessed to have David on our team!

And I of course am having very regular guided exercise sessions, featuring a variety of activities that include cardiovascular movement, stretching, resistance, and balance training. I have some mobility issues currently because of an ankle surgery, but you have likely noticed I don't intend to let that limit me more than it needs to—I can do a lot from my chair!!

And don't forget our Zoom Socials, which continue once/month. Try to check in to these if you can. I am grateful for Tim & Allison & Dave who add to the mix for these sessions, and for all of you who do check in. Next Zoom Social will be October 30th, the last Friday of the month.

I have been successful in recording a few of our Zoom sessions, very unprofessionally. Any recordings are posted on the resources page of our website. Most of these sessions do a least have any powerpoint slides that were presented also posted. If you need helping accessing these resources, please let me know. There are also some exercise & tai chi sessions you can follow on your own.

Link to our website (from the homepage click on 'resources':

<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/>

