

Back to Eden

Skin Brushing
Heart Health
Recipe
Charcoal

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Information contained in this newsletter is for advice only. If you choose to use any remedies or follow the advice in these newsletters, you do so at your own risk.

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Since our last newsletter we have conducted another very popular series with Barbara O'Neill as our speaker. Barbara is a gifted teacher who is able to show how incorrect lifestyle habits affect our health. One lady asked me how she could help her very sick relative. This relative is very uneducated on the connection between health and lifestyle. My suggestion to this lady is what I suggest to anyone who has a burden for sick relatives and friends. They need to be educated and this can be done in their own home using Barbara's DVDs. These are excellent to share, and are great if you want to educate your family and friends about natural health. Ring Misty Mountain Health Retreat directly to order these on 02 6567 8118. There are a number of topics she speaks on - all are excellent.

I have long been interested in skin problems as a family member has psoriasis. After following the skin brushing program for about six months, his psoriasis has gone. It does return very slightly when under stress, but it rarely bothers him now. This is why I have included an article on skin brushing. You can get some of the benefits of massage and hydrotherapy in your own home, and you can do it yourself. Do make sure you use a natural bristle brush (not nylon). These can be purchased at any health food store. If you plan to skin brush, do be consistent and keep it up for maximum benefit. You will be surprised how soft your skin feels.

I would love to hear if any of you have any experiences to share regarding success using natural remedies. Do contact me and tell me about them.

From Kaye and the Back to Eden team

Skin Brushing....

To ease the burden of your kidneys and make your skin glow with warmth, try skin brushing. This can be done in the morning before showering. Another brush over may be done at bedtime and will benefit the skin and not make you feel so chilly.

The skin is the largest organ and covers the entire outside of our body. Most people know to clean the outside of their bodies and do it on a regular basis. But what they do not consider or even take advantage of is cleaning their entire body, outside as well as inside. What they do not realise that they can actually stimulate the body to cleanse internally by skin brushing. The people who see the most dramatic results from skin brushing will be those with skin disease - but remember not to brush any skin areas affected by the disease or rash. It is highly recommended for both preventing and recovering from sicknesses and injuries.

Skin brushing is one of the better self-help health care methods available to us today. Skin brushing can be performed on your self while the skin is dry or wet, but this article is concentrating on dry skin brushing. Skin brushing before showering means that the dead skin and other debris will be washed away. Brushing after showering can be difficult because some of the natural oils have been washed off the skin, causing the brush to drag. Normally the brush is used dry. The skin benefits enormously from dry brushing because this actually massages the skin and produces a powerful surge in circulation that brings more oxygen and nutrients to the skin and flushes away more waste products. Although it will not be normally visible, the increased blood flow means increased perspiration, which is how elimination is accelerated.

Stimulation of the skin activates healing within your body. And the stimulation of these natural healing abilities maintain normal health while being extremely effective for improving the quality and shortening the time in recovering from injuries. Skin stimulation removes toxins and unwanted materials from pores and other external surface areas. It also stimulates nerve beds within its structure that in turn activate normal healing pathways and healing processes throughout your body. It is a well established fact that skin brushing paves the way to a better quality of healing and health

Skin brushing can be used over the entire body or just to special local areas to stimulate the body's normal inflammatory healing response. This can be an excellent daily routine for the "Prevention of sickness and disease". Skin brushing is easily incorporated into your morning or evening shower or bath. But remember skin brushing can also be used very effectively on new and old injured areas on your body as well.

"Itching" your body's automatic healing process

Skin brushing activates your body's automatic healing and immune processes. It is the sensation of itching that relates to you the body's desire to activate the healing process to a specific area or region. The fresh blood will bring with it oxygen and nutrients, and the old blood takes away waste products. Itching occurs on its own or during and sometimes following skin brushing and is a reminder that scratching or brushing is necessary. The "Itching Cue" is a vital part in the process for toxic conditions and for tissue repair and recovery from injuries. Itching will occur over a new injured site as well as old ones. This automatic cue to the healing process helps the body provide the best quality

of tissue repair as well as helps prevents unwanted fibrous tissue formations. So, both scratching with your fingers or by skin brushing are excellent ways of activating your body's natural healing inflammatory process. This amazing healing mechanism is incredible to watch and to be a part of as it helps maintain or accelerate the recovery of sick and injured tissues in your body back to health.

Elimination under normal conditions

When all four elimination systems are functioning correctly, (our digestive system, skin, lungs, kidneys and colon), they remove the majority of waste materials. The skin removes the majority of solid materials during those times of increased daily activity. But what happens to the elimination process when things are not as they should be?

Predictably, the colon is the first system to slow down or stop. Eating the wrong foods and drinking the wrong liquids are very harmful to you. When looking for the underlying causes of sickness and disease processes the colon has been linked to 92% of them. So, when you "Change your eating Habits" you "Change the quality of your health" too.

When the alimentary canal system slows down, stops, or backs up, it directs its elimination materials to the other three eliminations systems. When the skin, lungs, and kidney's pickup the overflow, they themselves become overloaded and start to malfunction. Since the skin can eliminate the most waste, this overloading into the skin produces a toxic skin condition.

Your "Skin" is your first indicator of an internal toxic body. When your internal body becomes toxic it will overflow into your skin causing your skin to become irritated and begin to itch. There are several main points of elimination of the skin including your face, mouth, arm pits, groins, feet, and toe nails. Odour, another internal toxic indicator, is also eliminated from these same places. Daily plaque build-ups on your tongue and teeth is yet another indicator of the presence of a toxic internal condition. These areas are among the first to start itching indicating your body has become toxic. This itching response indicates that your internal body is dirty or toxic and needs to be cleaned. Scratching of this area will produce a healing process

but if the internal body is dirty the itching will continue.

Premature skin wrinkling & aging

Internal toxic conditions are the leading factors for premature skin wrinkling and aging. And the internal toxic condition accelerates tissue aging in all parts of the body far greater than any other toxic condition including the external skin. Most ladies concern themselves with caring of their face, hair, neck, and hands. And this includes many different types of skin care treatments including toxic prescription drugs and radical surgical procedures. Here is a very interesting fact about facial care. Skin brushing coupled with daily facial exercising eliminates almost all skin wrinkles and unwanted skin lines. This process tightens up the skin tissue and brings in needed blood circulation. Individuals who do skin brushing and facial exercising routinely look 10 to 20 years younger over those who do not.

Immune & endocrine systems

One of the keys to good health comes through the proper functioning of your immune system and the quality of its underlying endocrine system. If the endocrine system functions properly, your chances of growing sick become next to none. Properly functioning immune and endocrine systems allow your body to grow old very slowly. As you will learn the endocrine and central nervous systems, together are responsible for keeping the body healthy and vigorous through old age. So, you may ask, "What are the underlying causative problems to premature tissue aging?"

Let's take a look at them. Poor eating and nutritional habits, inactive life style or living, and environmental (internal and external) pollutions are very toxic to your body. These three primary causes, cause your body's internal glands to become toxic allowing the onset of disease and sickness. Did you know that most illnesses are directly related to internal toxic malfunctioning glands? According to statistics, approximately 92% of all diseases have their origin in the colon. With the colon slowed down and often times stopped, the excessive toxic loads are placed onto the kidneys, lungs and skin, and this creates sicknesses.

Did you know that skin brushing stimulates toxic and overworked glands, promoting toxin elimination and, at the same time reinstates these glands to return to a proper functioning state of health. Skin brushing produces such extraordinary results through the individual's own responsibility of repetitious application. When individual's begin skin brushing (dry, wet or both) on a regular daily basis they remark that they feel more energized, vital, and full of life's energy.

The skin eliminates

The skin is the largest eliminative organ of the body and one of the four major intake and eliminative systems. (The digestive tract, kidneys, and lungs are the other three.) Over the course of a regular inactive day the skin eliminates over lots of waste products mixed in with its sweat. In individuals who are active or in athletes who are very active the skin eliminates many times more. Sweat glands are located through out the skin's surface and automatically eliminate unwanted metabolic waste produced. However, after the individual becomes inactive the skin slows down and performs much less. And when this individual complicates this inactive matter with tight polyester clothing and poor eating habits the skin is no longer able to perform its elimination process.

It breathes

Another need of the skin is fresh air. The skin needs to breathe. It needs fresh air and stimulation to work correctly. Remembering to expose your body to fresh air daily for about ten to fifteen minutes is another excellent idea. Exposing your entire body is even a better idea to optimize your health. Remember that tight synthetic clothing, including polyester materials, do not allow your skin to breath. Lose fitting cotton and natural fibre clothing is a good choice for allowing both skin breathing and elimination.

It absorbs

The skin also functions as an absorptive organ. Its pores are a major intake and elimination highway absorbing sun light, oxygen, vitamins, minerals, and even unwanted material such as environmental pollutions. So remember when you routinely apply toxic facial cosmetic substances to your skin, they will be

absorbed into your body and internal organs. This is known as “Self-Induced” toxic material build-ups. What are some common self-Induced toxic substances? To start with let’s mention Aluminum Chlorhydrate (alum) found in antiperspirants. Aluminum is very toxic to the body, let alone your skin. Alum causes your skin pores to constrict and shutdown. Those skin areas exposed to aluminum chlorhydrate then cease to function. With proper diet, skin brushing, baking soda baths, and cotton clothing you’ll no longer need antiperspirants.

Try this simple 30 day experiment and virtually eliminate all odors from your mouth, under your arms, your feet, and your body. Greatly reduce or completely stop eating animal proteins (meat) and dairy products. It is a well known fact that people who have already done this, especially vegetarians, will tell you that they no longer have mouth, arm pit, or body odours. And because of these simple diet changes they also have little to no dental problems or body hygiene difficulties.

Some other benefits

1. Makes muscles instantly stronger
2. Improves both muscle and joint flexibility gaining both mechanical advantage and leverage
3. Reduction and/or the removal of muscle congestion, and soreness that follows muscle activity
4. Reduces and/or removes muscle spasms, cramps, soreness stiffness, tenderness, and pain
5. In injury rehabilitation to both improve and shorten the healing time
6. Reduces pain, tenderness, soreness, stiffness to involved areas
7. Improves muscle performance and endurance

The immediate result from a brushing session is a feeling of improved physical well being. The quality and texture of your skin also improves immediately. The skin has a warm reddish glow, and you can feel the circulation increasing to those areas brushed.

Individuals with inactive life styles or jobs commonly experience stiff and rigid necks and shoulders that extend into their arms and down their spines into their low back. You will also experience muscle spasms with these inactive life style musculoskeletal conditions. Brushing instantly releases the stress and tension found within these body

areas. Following the brushing you will immediately feel better, muscular tensions decrease and your posture will automatically improve. Increased blood flow starts to those areas brushed and you will experience an increase in energy that allows you to feel energized and revitalized. That is why brushing leads to clearer thinking.

Brushing has also had great success in naturally relieving chronic musculoskeletal problems including tension headaches where drugs like painkillers were virtually ineffective.

Brushing the chest (front, sides, and back) stimulates your lungs, increasing the oxygenation to your chest and many parts of your body including your brain. By now you should not be surprised to learn that brushing improves many body functions including digestion and excessive calories. Did you also know that the way you breathe combined with chest stimulation helps to burn up a good portion of the food that you consume? If your breathing patterns and lungs are restricted, an additional burden is placed on your heart. This completely unnecessary burden prevents your heart from functioning normally. Your blood quality is also upgraded with skin brushing. Brushing enhances both the quantity and quality of the red blood cells, white blood cells, and your immune system which in turn benefits your overall circulation.

Beauty benefits through skin brushing

Women who skin brush regularly, eat a Vegetarian Diet of live cell foods, and participate in an exercise program look years younger than those who do not. When you do you discover your skin tones and tightens as the unwanted wrinkles, body fat, and cellulite deposits go away. If you commit to regular skin brushing, needed and necessary diet changes and simple walking exercises you have a 99% chance of being successful in eliminating the unwanted skin wrinkles and fat and cellulite accumulations.

Cellulite is toxic. Cellulitic toxic materials are stored in your body’s fat cells because they are unable to be eliminated. So, when they can not be eliminated they are stored. Combining skin brushing with a live cell alkaline diet program and a fun shared exercising routine breaks down these unwanted

body toxic deposits and sends them out of your body through elimination channels. Skin brushing also stimulates hormonal and oil producing glands. The benefits from this are a rosy, resilient, and youthful skin look. Remember the three - skin brushing, vegetarian diet, and daily exercise.

Starting tip

During your initial starting transition time, if your skin is dry, a quick oil massage will work wonders. As a moisturizer, use cold-pressed natural oil. Extra virgin olive oil, sesame, avocado, almond, and castor oil works very well. Now remember this, the best in skin care oils or moisturizers should always be very inexpensive. One hundred percent plain cocoa butter or coconut oil is an excellent choice skin care and youthful look. It produces a luster glow of velvety-smooth skin.

The brush size should be about the size of your hand with a moderately soft natural vegetable fibre bristle. Nylon or synthetic fibres are not recommended because they are too sharp and can hurt your skin. Brushes can be purchased from Health Food stores.

Skin sensitivity & brushing

Skin sensitivity varies a lot from person to person. But initially start with a softer brush bristle. Remember to test the brush on your skin to determine your skin’s sensitivity level. If the brush bristles are too hard they will feel harsh on your skin surface. If this is the case look for a brush that has softer ones. Some individuals may be able to withstand a harder firmer brush but generally most are not. So, generally speaking you will probably require a softer finer at first until your skin firms up and can withstand firmer brush bristles. Many have found that as they continue brushing they can easily advance up to a firmer brush in time. However, remember many parts of your body are more sensitive than others and require lighter and softer brushing strokes with finer softer brushes. You may choose, like many others, to have a selection of various brushes. Some of the more sensitive areas are your face, ears, inner thighs, abdomen, and chest. May I suggest that you brush gently to start with in order to test the area being brushed. When your skin has become more acclimated and used to your brushing, you may choose to advance up to a more coarser brush bristle. Also you may choose to use a

Loofah bathing sponge to clean and stimulate your skin with. But, which ever the case may be always remember to first test for your skin's comfort zone by rubbing the bristles of the brush or loofah sponge over the back of your hand. The sensation should be comfortable and pleasant. Avoid any unpleasant or irritating feeling brushes or sponges. You should know that your skin adapts and firms up very quickly and within a few days to a week the initial tenderness leaves.

All well designed programs will tell you that it takes about 30 days to see and feel the changes. This one is no different. May I suggest you try this simple experiment below. Change nothing in your behavior or daily acts except to add the below suggestion. If you have excessive weight accumulation or cellulite build-up on some part of your body such as your stomach, skin brush this area everytime you bathe (shower or tub). Do a good job skin brushing this area each time you bathe. If the area is your stomach following the skin brushing your stomach will turn red from increase blood flow - not from irritation. Do this for four weeks and see if you don't notice that the fatty tissue and cellulite around your waist decreases and your pants fit looser. Also you should notice a better digestive tract flow and regularity.

Instructions & Cautions For Skin Brushing

The instructions below are laid out and follow the body's lymphatic and blood vascular flow. You will get better results if you follow the below sequence but any skin brushing will most definitely help and improve the condition. Before we get started let's mention some the conditions where skin brushing is not recommended.

Cautions:

1. Do not skin brush on or over rashes, wounds, cuts, infections, or other skin problems, including all inflammatory circulatory problems such as phlebitis.
2. Do not "Over Brush" any area as it can produce skin irritations.
3. Start gently with soft strokes.

Use the full body skin brush procedure as listed below. And with time and experience the whole process should take less more than ten minutes. You may ask later why do I need to brush both "Back and Forth" and "Up and Down". Well, it is because there is an automatic built-in

stretch reflex stimulation program located within your skin. As you activate your skin's stretch reflexes by brushing both back and forth and up and down your body's automatic and natural healing responses start to work. I hope this helps you to understand why we brush both ways.

Start with your fingers and hands (brushing each section of the body between 8 to 16 times each). Advance up arms to neck (brushing in upward strokes towards neck). Repeat for other arm. Now, start brushing your feet to your toes, ankles, legs, knees, on up to your hips. Repeat with other leg. Remember to always brush toward the heart. For those of who have cellulite problems double or triple the amount of skin brushing to those affected areas.

Brush neck gently from nape of neck along jawbone to under the chin, working down toward the shoulder. Place brush at base of neck at back, gently rocking brush from side to side. This movement stimulates the pituitary gland. Then GENTLY do the same over the larynx. This helps to stimulate and activate both the thyroid and parathyroid glands to utilize calcium.

Hold the brush in your right hand at the dowager's on the top of the spine and bring the brush GENTLY around to the right and slide through the hollow of sternal notch on top of breast bone, just below the Adam's Apple. (Women: Do

not brush breasts). Do this 6 to 8 times. This stimulates the thymus gland, and will help strengthen immune system. Repeat on other side of body.

To stimulate lymphatic system, hold the brush firmly in place, rotate gently 6 to 8 times to the left and 6 to 8 times to the right. Do this in your armpits and groins. Do not brush genitals.

Next do the front and sides of your body, (not breasts on women), waistline, down back from neck to hips. Then brush up and down 12 to 16 times along the spine starting at the coccyx (tailbone) and reaching as high as you can. Brush the buttocks in any direction covering the area 6 to 8 times. Give special attention to the buttocks and upper thighs. This will help rid the body of cellulite After brushing, take a shower to wash away dead particles.

This entire process should total about six minutes, but even three minutes will benefit your health.

Surprisingly in a short time you will notice the benefits of skin brushing. You should notice that your muscle tone is better, the distribution and reduction of fat and cellulite deposits is better, and you will experience a feeling of being energized.

New Vegetarian and Natural Health Spring 2004

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Heart Disease:

.....Conquering the Number One Killer

Condensed from **PROOF POSITIVE:** by Neil Nedley M.D.
Continuing from last newsletter

Read on to see how fibre, oxidised cholesterol and antioxidant vitamins affect our heart health

Fibre in our food will help lower cholesterol. Most people eat far less than the recommended 25 to 30 grams per day. Evidence now suggests that a low fat, high fibre, high carbohydrate diet offers a number of advantages. Eating at least 30 to 40 grams of fibre per day from a variety of plant foods can lower your risk of heart disease, cancer, intestinal disorders, and other diseases.

Many are surprised to learn that there are different types of fibre. Yet all fibres have one thing in common—they cannot be digested by the normal human intestinal system. It is the water-soluble fibres that are particularly valuable for lowering cholesterol. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and legumes, all in their natural, unrefined state, are the five main food groups that contain this cholesterol-lowering fibre. Examples of such water-soluble fibres are oat bran and fruit pectin. These compounds work by binding to cholesterol and bile acids (excreted by the liver) in the small intestine, thus preventing their absorption. Fortunately, neither bile nor cholesterol is absorbed high in the intestinal tract, but rather in the distal ileum (the last part of the small bowel). This allows the fibre plenty of time to bind up these compounds. If, however, adequate fibre is lacking, both bile and cholesterol are reabsorbed into the blood stream, raising blood cholesterol levels. Bile acids are actually made from cholesterol by the liver. As a result, the more bile you lose in the stool, the more cholesterol the body must utilize to make new bile acids that are necessary for fat digestion. Animal products (meat, milk, eggs, and cheese) have absolutely no fibre.

Because some skeptics were still not willing to believe that oats can lower cholesterol, a computer assessment (meta-analysis) of 20 carefully performed oat studies was completed in 1992. The results demonstrated that oat products in the diet significantly reduce cholesterol levels. Another grain that has been found to have beneficial effects on blood cholesterol levels is buckwheat. A study from mainland China found buckwheat to lower both total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol; at the same time it lowered the ratio of total cholesterol to HDL.

Animal Protein Raises Cholesterol

The relationships between cholesterol and protein have been published in the medical literature for some 20 years, but for the most part have been sadly neglected. An extensive body of research now has established that serum cholesterol is extremely dependent on the type of protein consumed. Animal protein alone (even skim milk protein) will increase blood cholesterol levels while plant proteins will decrease cholesterol. In fact, many people who are on otherwise heart-healthy diets will be unable to lower their cholesterol sufficiently unless they completely eliminate animal protein from their diets. Research has shown that switching from a low saturated fat, low cholesterol diet using skim milk protein to a low saturated fat, low cholesterol diet using soy protein as a milk substitute can drop cholesterol levels by as much as 1.5 - 2.0 in as little as three weeks. I have seen this happen in many of my patients who have tried a total vegetarian diet (no animal protein). If a dramatic reduction does not occur in such a diet, I thoroughly review what the patient is actually eating, and often find that animal protein has been unwittingly consumed. Once the animal protein is completely excluded, the expected dramatic result usually occurs.

The Problem with Oxidized Cholesterol

Cholesterol exposed to the atmosphere for a period of time tends to combine with oxygen in the air, producing what is called "oxidized cholesterol." This compound may turn out to be the most important dietary factor that influences heart disease risk.

As early as the 1940s it was discovered that not all cholesterol was the same in its likelihood of causing atherosclerosis. Dr. Chaikoff and associates found that chickens that were fed large amounts of cholesterol developed high blood cholesterol levels and a considerable amount of atherosclerosis. On the other hand, chickens that were given hormones to raise their cholesterol to similar levels had virtually no fatty buildup in their arteries. Drs. Peng and Taylor in Albany, New York carried on further experiments looking for something in dietary cholesterol that was particularly damaging to blood vessels.

Any articles authored by Americans use different figures to measure their cholesterol levels. To convert these figures to the Australian figures, divide the American number by 38.5. This will give the Australian equivalent. I have endeavoured to do this in this article.

Some of the chemicals, called "oxidation products," were so toxic that they destroyed cells that line the arteries in less than 24 hours. Furthermore, it took only a small amount of these toxic chemicals to cause irreversible damage. In Peng and Taylor's work, the deadly effects on blood vessels occurred when as little as one half of one percent of the blood cholesterol was oxidized. Their research is particularly important because destruction of artery-lining cells is one of the main factors that begins or accelerates the buildup of cholesterol in atherosclerosis.

Peng and Taylor also made chemical measurements of specific foods to see how much oxidized cholesterol they contained. The researchers then tested the harmful compounds on blood vessel cells of monkeys to determine how dangerous they were. **The most harmful combination of cholesterol oxidation products was found in custard mix where sugar, milk, and eggs were combined.** The dried mix was apparently exposed to air for a considerable period of time due to its long shelf life.

It is interesting to read that over 100 years ago the dangers of custards and puddings was recognized by Ellen White. She warned "Especially harmful are the custards and puddings in which milk, eggs, and sugar are the chief ingredients. The free use of milk and sugar taken together should be avoided."

Some have observed that ice cream is the most common form of custard in America today. Pancake mixes containing eggs and dried powdered milk were equally as harmful as custard. The third most harmful item was Parmesan cheese; it turned out to be as damaging as lard. Furthermore, eating oxidized cholesterol may raise blood cholesterol levels more than pure cholesterol alone. However, even if your blood cholesterol level remains normal, animal research demonstrates that eating oxidized cholesterol can have adverse consequences.

The rabbits were fed a moderate amount of pure, non-oxidized cholesterol for 45 days. Their blood cholesterol levels stayed in the normal range and they suffered no damage to their blood vessels. Those rabbits that were given the same amount of oxidized cholesterol also maintained normal blood cholesterol values. However, they sustained significant damage

to their blood vessels. Research on humans also supports the fact that **oxidized cholesterol in the diet can increase your risk of heart disease even if your blood cholesterol levels stay normal.** For example, we have known for years that—regardless of your blood cholesterol level—the more cholesterol you eat, the greater your risk of heart disease. Cholesterol in the diet is what is called an “independent risk factor” for the development of heart disease.

Let me try to make this clearer with an example. Assume that twin sisters are identical in every factor that relates to heart disease. They have identical blood pressures, they both have never smoked, they have identical genes, etc. Let us also assume that they have identical blood cholesterol levels. But suppose there is one difference: one of the sisters eats much more cholesterol than the other. What the research tells us is that the liberal cholesterol eater is much more likely to suffer a heart attack. Simply put, we know that cholesterol in your diet is harmful for more reasons than its tendency to raise blood cholesterol. I believe that a large amount of this added danger is explained by the presence of oxidized cholesterol. Even though as of this date, detailed measurements of oxidized cholesterol have not been made on every food, it is logical to assume that every food that contains cholesterol has some oxidation products in it. The important message is that even individuals with normal blood cholesterol should be careful to limit cholesterol in their diets. If you are not on such a low cholesterol diet, then you are likely at increased risk of heart attack or stroke, regardless of what your cholesterol numbers are.

Atherosclerosis often begins early in life. The oxidized cholesterol studies may also help to explain why some individuals develop atherosclerosis earlier than others. One important early factor may be the type of milk that infants drink. When a baby consumes human breast milk directly from the mother, it does get cholesterol in that milk. However, the cholesterol that comes from mom is pure, not oxidized like that present in cow’s milk-based formulas that have been extensively processed in the presence of air. Peng and Taylor identified toxic oxidized cholesterol products in powdered infant milk formula. One theory is that babies that are fed on cow’s milk formula are predisposed to fatty streaks early in infancy. However, you should not conclude from this that the best way for adults to get their milk is to go down to the barn and get it straight from the cow to minimize exposure to air! That method might decrease your consumption of oxidized cholesterol, but it would also greatly increase your exposure to a host of infectious diseases.

Our growing understanding of oxidized cholesterol has led me to conclude that any

program that does not address this subject is neglecting one of the most important factors in decreasing heart disease risk. I think that the increased research attention on oxidation products of cholesterol will illuminate some other relationships. For instance, it is very possible that foods with high sugar content are more susceptible to oxidation. This would help further explain the abundant oxidation products that are found in things like custard and pancakes—foods with a source of cholesterol (milk and eggs) and sugar. It would also explain why dietary sugar has repeatedly been linked to atherosclerosis.

Problems with Iron and Oxidation

In 1992, Scandinavian researchers surprised many in the medical community with the discovery that higher amounts of iron stored in the body increased a person’s risk of heart disease. These researchers highlighted an important fact: in addition to cholesterol being oxidized in our food, it may also become oxidized within our bodies. Higher blood iron levels (measured by a blood compound called “ferritin”) may increase the conversion of normal cholesterol into the dangerous oxidized variety—within our own bodies. In fact, iron is a well-recognized stimulant (catalyst) of oxidation. Oxidized compounds like oxidized cholesterol can then damage the lining of blood vessels and promote atherosclerosis.

Iron also promotes higher hemoglobin levels. Although high hemoglobins were once thought to be desirable, too high a hemoglobin level can present problems. More hemoglobin means more oxygen in the blood. Oxygen-carrying hemoglobin can, in turn, provide fuel for the oxidation that iron stimulates. Therefore, excessive iron may be adversely working in two ways in our blood: first, it means more oxygen is present, and second, it stimulates the oxygen to combine with cholesterol to form oxidized cholesterol. A third adverse result of higher hemoglobin levels is that it makes the blood thicker and more likely to clot and initiate a heart attack.

It is important to understand that we do need iron, but excess iron appears to be a problem. Fortunately, a person can maintain sufficient iron levels without having excess iron by adopting a total vegetarian diet. Research from Harvard University proves these relationships. Harvard researchers analyzed the dietary habits of nearly 45,000 men and then kept in touch with them for four years. They found that the men who ate the largest amount of animal sources of iron (called “heme” iron) had higher rates of heart attacks. This relationship could not be explained by differences in the amount of fat or cholesterol they were eating. Those same men with liberal intakes of iron from animal sources

also had higher serum ferritin levels, meaning that they had more iron stored in their bodies.

Vitamins Benefit Cholesterol Levels

We have seen that iron appears to increase the likelihood that normal cholesterol will become oxidized in our bodies. However, there are a number of substances in foods that appear to prevent oxidation from taking place inside of us. These substances are called antioxidants. Three of the most well-researched compounds in this regard are the antioxidant vitamins E, C, and beta-carotene.

Vitamin E intake has been found to reduce one’s risk of heart disease. A total of 40,000 men were categorized as to the amount of their daily vitamin E intake. Those who consumed 60 IU per day decreased their risk of heart disease by 34 to 50 percent, regardless of other food they consumed.

How can we get enough vitamin E in our diet on a daily basis? Since animal products are low in vitamin E, this leaves us with a choice of taking supplements or making substantially more vegetarian food choices. Although there are no known toxic effects, there is also no medical justification for the use of large doses of vitamin E supplements to prevent heart disease, particularly since it is widely distributed in common foods. Good sources of Vitamin E are wheat germ, vegetable oils, legumes, nuts (particularly almonds), whole grains, and green, leafy vegetables. As we have already noted, the protection against heart disease provided by vitamin E is thought to be due to the prevention of the oxidation of cholesterol within the body.

Beta-carotene Foods Benefit Cholesterol Levels

A Harvard University study found that the consumption of beta-carotene foods reduced cardiac deaths. Over a period of nearly five years, some 1300 individuals participated in this research. The results showed that an increased consumption of fruits and vegetables high in beta-carotene decreased subsequent cardiovascular disease deaths. Interestingly, taking supplements of beta-carotene does not lower the risk of heart disease. Thus, other antioxidant nutrients in the fruits and vegetables may be adding a protective effect to the blood vessels.

Beta-carotene is plentiful in carrots, tomatoes, broccoli, strawberries, and the leafy green vegetables such as kale, collards, and mustard greens. It is also found in watermelon, pineapples, and the yellow types of squash. In the study, when these foods were consumed, no matter what the cholesterol level was in the participants, there was an independent relationship in lowering the heart attack risk.

Other Dietary Factors Affecting Heart Disease: Homocysteine

Homocysteine is one of more than 20 different amino acids that the body uses to construct proteins and carry out chemical processes in the cells. Although genes play a part in elevated levels of homocysteine, diet also has a significant role. Researchers have now found that individuals with high levels of homocysteine in their bloodstreams are twice as likely to have clogged arteries. One researcher stated that because many Americans have elevated homocysteine levels, it “may account for a substantial proportion of vascular disease in the United States.” For every 10 percent rise in blood homocysteine levels, heart disease risk goes up roughly 10 percent as well. Although this is not quite as significant a risk factor as serum cholesterol (for every 10 percent risk in cholesterol there is a 20 to 30 percent rise in heart disease risk), homocysteine levels are another “independent risk factor” for the disease. The good news, as usual, is that a healthful lifestyle can help solve the problem by beneficially decreasing blood homocysteine levels. Coffee drinkers have high blood levels of the substance. If they smoke it is higher, according to a study of 16,000 adults in Norway. Abstaining from coffee and tobacco will go a long way in freeing a person from this risk of heart disease.

Folate and vitamins B6 and B12 in the diet get rid of homocysteine, converting it to another amino acid called methionine. These B vitamins are found in fortified soy milks and certain breakfast cereals as well as animal products. Obtaining at least 400 mcg/day of folate in fruits and vegetables solely may reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke by up to 40 percent by lowering homocysteine levels, while resulting in an estimated 13,000 fewer deaths per year from coronary heart disease. Women (especially those who may get pregnant) should consume this amount of folic acid each day to prevent fetal malformations of the central nervous system.

Adequate supplies of methionine (an essential amino acid) are important and can be easily obtained from a total vegetarian diet. However, excessive amounts of methionine may be dangerous. One of the reasons for this is that methionine is also converted in the body to homocysteine. Avoiding foods with excessive levels of methionine, such as eggs, cheese, beef, fowl, and fish seems prudent.

Benefits HDL Cholesterol Levels

When the HDL cholesterol is high, it extracts the bad cholesterol from the arteries and helps protect the arteries from damage. High levels of HDL may even help reverse coronary

artery disease. How can we get our HDL levels up? Exercise has been shown to raise HDL. The exercise that raises HDL is not the weight-lifting type, but rather the more active or aerobic sort that gets the heart rate up and requires rhythmic body movements and deep breathing. The more aerobic exercise obtained the greater the rise in HDL. Because of the role of exercise in raising HDL and thus lowering the risk of atherosclerosis, low physical fitness should be thought of as an independent risk factor for the development of heart disease: Factors that Raise HDL Levels. The best news is that if you are unfit now, and you get on a regular exercise program, research indicates that you can decrease your risk of heart disease by 50 percent.

High doses of the B vitamin, niacin, can boost HDL levels; however, in these doses the niacin is acting as a drug rather than a vitamin. Consequently, if you are taking high doses of niacin you should be under a doctor's care. Careful medical monitoring for side effects is strongly recommended. Particular attention should be paid to the liver as high doses of niacin can be toxic to that organ on occasion.

Estrogen in women raises HDL. This may be one of the primary reasons why the average woman does not experience heart disease until 10 years later than the average man. After menopause, when estrogen production drops, women quickly catch up with men with regard to heart disease risk. Thus, 52 percent of all coronary heart disease deaths occur in women.

When individuals stop smoking, their HDL usually rises significantly as a result. Weight loss can also help raise your HDL. Foods containing lecithin, ginseng, garlic, onions, the trace mineral chromium, vitamin C, and vitamin E all can help raise HDL. An example of a food with HDL-boosting effects is garlic. One garlic study had individuals with coronary heart disease use up to four cloves of garlic each day for eight months. The results are impressive.

At the start of the study, HDL levels were dismally low, at only 17 percent of the total cholesterol. They were solidly in the danger zone. However, at the end of eight months their absolute levels of HDLs were a full 65 percent higher, at 28 percent of the total. Moreover, garlic not only raised the desirable HDL, it also lowered total and LDL cholesterol as well as triglycerides. In other words, all cholesterol values moved in the right direction. The only significant variable in this study was the consumption of garlic. From many different perspectives, garlic is not only a food enhancer, but is part of a healthful diet.

Triglycerides

“Triglyceride” refers to a compound that is made up of three fat (technically, “fatty

acid”) chains. These compounds are the main transport form of fat in the bloodstream. Furthermore, the fat in foods is usually in the form of triglycerides. Elevated amounts of triglycerides are also a risk factor for heart disease. For years it has been recognized that the higher one's triglycerides, the lower his HDL tends to be. It is not clear whether triglycerides depress HDL, but this may be the case. In any event, bringing down a high triglyceride level will invariably boost HDL.

How do we get the triglycerides down? One step is to lose weight. Many people with high triglycerides are overweight. Getting down to your ideal weight may bring your triglycerides into the ideal range (less than 150mg/dl). Another step is to exercise. Exercise, as we have already noted, also raises HDL. The third item listed is to eat less fat. As we have already seen, most of the lipids in our diet are triglycerides by nature. In addition, decreasing your stress level and stopping smoking can lower the triglycerides.

Many people have high triglyceride levels just because of alcohol use. When they become abstainers, their triglyceride levels come down to normal. Lastly, use sugar sparingly. Sugar raises triglycerides. If you want to bring your triglycerides into line, especially avoid refined sugars like white sugar, honey, molasses, and soft drinks, desserts, candies, etc. that utilize those sweeteners. Sweeteners in combination with cholesterol and saturated fats as in custards and ice cream are especially to be avoided.

Genetics and Cholesterol

Some individuals genetically have a tendency toward low blood cholesterol levels. However, if they follow a poor lifestyle, they can still have a heart attack. Other individuals have “bad genes” that predispose them to high cholesterol levels. However, if their overall lifestyle is good they can definitely postpone—if not completely avoid—a heart attack. There are people who genetically tend to run high total cholesterol levels but may not be at risk for heart attacks because they are living a healthy lifestyle and have high HDL levels.

The important message is this: we need to look beyond what our cholesterol levels are, beyond what our HDL levels are, and beyond what our triglycerides are. The number one line of defence is to live a healthful lifestyle. This includes special attention to a food intake that is based largely on the cholesterol-free, high-fibre plant foods that we have been looking at in this chapter. We have also identified other aspects of a heart disease preventive regimen including regular exercise, not smoking, and controlling blood pressure. However, there are still other factors in a heart-healthy lifestyle that we must address if we want to maximize the preventive potential of heart disease.

Risk Factors Beyond Cholesterol: "Normal" Weight

In 1990, the U.S. Government revised women's weight guidelines. This appeared to support the idea that a modest weight gain in middle age was acceptable. However, a subsequent study analysed weight data on over 110,000 female registered nurses over a 14-year period. The Harvard researchers found that any weight gain after 18 years old increased the risk of heart disease. Even among those who were within the new guidelines for normal weight, the more weight they gained, the more they increased their heart disease risk. There was about a 20 percent increase in risk for the smallest weight gain but nearly four times the chance of heart attack for the largest weight gainers who were still within the normal weight guidelines.

The research article concluded that a weight gain after 18 years of age is a strong predictor of heart disease. It expressed concerns that current U.S. weight guidelines were falsely reassuring a large proportion of people who are within the current guidelines but have avoidable risk factors for heart disease. Although we have known for years that obesity alone is a risk for heart disease, this study shows that even "nicely filled out" people may have a significant risk for heart disease compared with their thinner nonsmoking counterparts.

Use of Drugs to Reduce Cholesterol Levels

In today's America it is popular to lower high cholesterol levels with drugs. We have very potent medications that can indeed help lower cholesterol, but they all have the potential for adverse side effects. On the other hand, many who adopt a healthful lifestyle find that they can lower their cholesterol levels as much or more than they could with drugs—and they avoid the potentially harmful side effects. There are no adverse side effects when following a judicious regular exercise program and consuming a diet low in saturated fat, low in cholesterol, and high in fibre. There are only good side effects that result from such a lifestyle. Examples include a better energy level, sounder sleep, more attractive appearance, and less minor illnesses.

When physicians prescribe medications, we must always weigh the benefits against the risks. It is true that a small minority of the population, because of genetic defects, may need medication in addition to a healthful lifestyle to prevent or reverse heart disease. However, the vast majority would not need such medication if they developed a healthful lifestyle to its fullest potential.

Medication is not really the best answer to America's number one killer, heart disease. Prescription drugs have their place, but in the

overall prevention of heart disease, the best, most inexpensive, and most effective way is still a healthy lifestyle. A healthful diet is not expensive and the benefits are far reaching. Even the drug manufacturers who write the Physician's Desk Reference of prescription drugs always mention that diet is the first and cornerstone step of cholesterol-lowering therapy. Even for those on medications, a good diet is still necessary. That person will get a greater cholesterol-lowering effect if they make lifestyle changes in addition to taking a pill.

Life Stresses Can Cause a Heart Attack

Stress is yet another factor that increases heart attack risk. Deadlines, disagreements with the boss, and other such pulse-raising situations all significantly increase heart attack risk. A total of 129 heart attack survivors were questioned about everything that happened to them in the 26 hours before the attack. Serious stress was experienced by 51 percent. In comparison, a large number of people that did not have a heart attack were asked about their stresses. Only 12 percent of those experienced any serious stress in the same time frame.

Anger Can be Dangerous

Stressful situations that provoke anger are especially trying for those with heart disease. Individuals with pre-existing heart disease more than double their risk of myocardial infarction when they get angry. This increased risk continues for two hours after the anger episode.

It is clear from these and other studies that stressful experiences can significantly raise our heart attack risk. One reason may be that stress can cause heart arteries to go into spasm. As a result, when the body's clotting cells, the platelets, try to pass through that artery they are restrained and clot more easily.

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Recipes

TOFFEE NUT PEAR CAKE

2 c wholemeal flour
¼ c tahini or olive oil
¼ cup honey
4 pears, peeled and sliced or canned
1 c silken tofu
1 c soy milk
1 T extra honey
chopped pecans or walnuts

Rub tahini (or oil) and honey into flour. Press ¾ of this mix into a baking dish. Bake 10 mins. Arrange pears on this base. Blend remaining flour mix, tofu, soy milk and honey. Pour over pears and sprinkle with chopped nuts. Bake ¾ to 1 hour. May use any stewed or canned fruit instead of pears.

BLIND DATE RICE PUDDING

3 c cooked brown rice
1 c chopped dates
½ t grated lemon or orange rind
1 ½ c orange juice or more (may use any other fruit juice)
½ c raw cashews
1 ripe banana
1 ½ t vanilla
¼ t sea salt
1-2 t ground coriander (opt)

Spread half the rice evenly in bottom of baking dish. Spread the chopped dates over the rice, and cover with remaining rice. Blend remaining ingredients thoroughly and pour over rice. Bake for 45 mins at 190°. Serve hot or chilled. Serves 4-6. (May omit banana, but it is nicer with it.)

Charcoal

In the past I have had activated charcoal for sale but since then I have been unable to find a supplier. From time to time I receive inquiries asking if I still sell it. I am now able to once again offer this for sale. The cost is 200g for \$10. Activated charcoal is able to adsorb or bind toxins from the stomach and intestines when taken internally, and when used as a poultice externally is able to draw the poisons out through the skin. This is a must to have on hand for sickness and emergencies. More about this amazing substance in next newsletter.