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Acupuncture for Cholesterol Management

What is cholesterol and how is it bad? Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body and many foods. Your body needs cholesterol to function normally and makes all that you need. Too much cholesterol can sometimes build up in your arteries. After a while, these deposits narrow your arteries, putting you at risk for heart disease and stroke.



Since you can have high cholesterol without realizing it, it's important to have your blood cholesterol levels checked. Most of the 65 million Americans with high cholesterol have no symptoms. All adults age 20 and older should have their cholesterol levels checked at least once every five years, or more frequently if cholesterol levels are elevated.

High cholesterol can also develop in early childhood and adolescence, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the risk increases as weight increases. In the United States alone, more than twenty percent of youth aged 12-19 years have at least one abnormal lipid level. Children over the age of two should have their cholesterol checked if they are overweight or obese, have a family history of high cholesterol or heart disease, have diabetes, high blood pressure, or certain chronic conditions such as kidney disease, inflammatory diseases, congenital heart disease, and childhood cancer.

Research has clearly shown that lowering cholesterol can reduce the risk of developing heart disease. Whether you have heart disease already or want to prevent it, you can reduce your risk for having a heart attack by lowering your cholesterol level.

According to the American Heart Association, exercise and a healthy, balanced diet low in cholesterol and saturated fats is important to lowering risk and improving your cardiovascular health. Speak to your health care providers to make sure your cholesterol is being monitored and find out how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you stay healthy.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be used to treat many of the health conditions known to drastically increase the risk of heart disease and high cholesterol including smoking, high blood pressure, excess weight, and diabetes.

The main goal in treating high cholesterol is to lower your LDL level. Studies have proven that lowering LDL can prevent heart attacks and reduce deaths from heart disease in both men and women.

Being physically inactive contributes to overweight and can raise your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), which is known as the "bad" cholesterol. Inactivity lowers your high-density lipoprotein (HDL) or "good" cholesterol. Regular physical activity can raise HDL and lower triglycerides, and can help you lose weight. In that way, activity can help lower your LDL. Participate in physical activity of moderate intensity-like brisk walking-for at least 30 minutes on most, and preferably all, days of the week. No time? Break the 30 minutes into three, 10-minute segments during the day.

Don't smoke. If you do smoke, contact our office to discuss ways in which acupuncture can help you quit.

Call today to see how Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you with your cholesterol management goals!

World Heart Day

Created by the World Heart Federation, September 29th is World Heart Day, which focuses on informing people around the globe that heart disease and stroke are the world's leading cause of death, claiming 17.3 million lives each year, and the numbers are rising. According to the World Heart Federation, it is expected that by 2030, 23 million people will die from cardiovascular diseases each year. It is also predicted that at least 80 percent of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke will be avoided if the main risk factors--tobacco, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity--are controlled.

Cardiovascular Disease can affect people of all ages and population groups, including women and children. In fact, one in three children in the United States is overweight or obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems--such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease--that were once seen only in adults. Reduce your family's risk for heart disease and stroke by making basic lifestyle changes in these areas:

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Obesity is associated with diabetes, high blood pressure and coronary artery disease, all of which increase the risk of developing heart disease. Studies have shown that excess body weight itself (and not just the associated medical conditions) can also lead to heart failure. Even if you are entirely healthy otherwise, being overweight still places you at a greater risk for developing heart failure.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are an excellent tool when it comes to losing weight. They can help to energize the body, maximize the absorption of nutrients, regulate elimination, control overeating, suppress the appetite, and reduce anxiety.

Reduce Stress

Stress is a normal part of life, but if left unmanaged, stress can lead to emotional, psychological, and even physical problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pains, or an irregular heart rate. Medical researchers aren't exactly sure why stress increases the risk of heart disease. Stress itself might be a risk factor, or it could be that high levels of stress make other risk factors worse. For example, if you are under stress, your blood pressure goes up, you may overeat, you may exercise less, and you may be more likely to smoke.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the substantial benefits of acupuncture in the treatment of stress, anxiety and mental health. In addition to acupuncture, Oriental medicine offers a whole gamut of tools and techniques that can be integrated into your life to keep stress in check. These tools include Tui Na, Qi Gong exercises, herbal medicine, dietary therapy, meditations and acupressure that you can administer at home.

Improve Sleep

Poor sleep has been linked with high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, heart failure, heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and obesity. Researchers have shown that getting at least eight hours of sleep is needed for good heart health. Getting less than eight hours of sleep can put you at a greater risk for developing heart disease.

Acupuncture can successfully treat a wide array of sleep problems without any of the side effects of prescription or over-the-counter sleep aids. The acupuncture treatments for sleeping problems focus on the root disharmony within the body that is causing the insomnia. Therefore, those who receive acupuncture for insomnia achieve not only better sleep, but also an overall improvement of physical and mental health.

Come in for a consultation to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can optimize your heart health and help you to live a long, healthy life.

Pomegranate Juice

In China, the pomegranate fruit symbolizes longevity. Now there is scientific evidence for the fruit's restorative powers.

Scientists have tested the juice in mice and found that it combats hardening of the arteries



(atherogenesis) and related diseases, such as heart attacks and strokes.

According to results published in the August 2006 issue of *Atherosclerosis*, subjects who drank 180 ml (6 oz.) of pomegranate juice per day for three months experienced a reduced risk for atherosclerosis, a condition that leads to arterial wall thickening and hardening.

Scientists have long known about the health benefits of pomegranates. The latest studies show that the juice limits the genetic tendency toward hardening of the arteries.

"We have established that polyphenols [antioxidant chemicals] and other natural compounds contained in pomegranate juice may retard atherogenesis," said Claudio Napoli, a professor of medicine and clinical pathology at the University of Naples, Italy. "The protective effects of pomegranate juice were higher than previously assumed."

Green Tea

Green tea contains several powerful antioxidants that reduce bad cholesterol and boost good cholesterol, improving an individual's overall cholesterol profile.

Researchers have also found that green tea appears to protect against oxygen-induced damage to bad cholesterol.

Drinking green tea also seems to enhance cardiovascular health by improving the consistency of platelets in the blood and may even lower blood pressure.

Healthy Diet Tips for High Cholesterol

A healthy diet is one way to manage your cholesterol. Making a few simple changes in your daily diet can help lower your cholesterol:

- * Increase intake of fiber-rich foods such as oatmeal, whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes (beans).
- * Consume soy products to help lower cholesterol levels, thanks to their isoflavone content.
- * Include garlic, onions, avocados, salmon, almonds and walnuts in your diet.
- * Use omega-3 oils such as flaxseed oil and fish oil.
- * Consume seafood, seeds and nuts to get more copper and chromium--minerals that can lower cholesterol levels.

