

fitness

Barry Franklin



Not all cholesterol is bad for your heart

Question: Is it true that a certain form of cholesterol in the blood is actually associated with a decreased risk for heart disease? I thought all cholesterol was bad? Please explain.

M.S. Farmington
Studies have shown that persons with high levels of cholesterol are at increased risk of developing atherosclerosis (accumulated fatty material within or beneath the surfaces of arteries). This may lead to heart problems

because the fat accumulations restrict the flow of blood (and oxygen) to the heart muscle.

Because blood is largely water and cholesterol does not dissolve in water, the transport of cholesterol about the body appears to create a problem. However, nature has solved this problem by packaging cholesterol together with proteins as minute particles called "lipoproteins."

Among the two major forms in which cholesterol comes packaged are the "high density lipoprotein," or HDL

form, and "low density lipoprotein," or LDL form.

The risk of heart attack, it now appears, may depend not so much on the total amount of cholesterol as on the form it takes.

LDL cholesterol is taken up by the body cells as building blocks for hormones and cell membranes. When there is too much of it in the blood, it may form fatty deposits on artery walls. On the other hand, HDL cholesterol is believed to clear away unnecessary cholesterol

from tissues and return it to the liver to be excreted.

STUDIES HAVE shown that high levels of LDL cholesterol are associated with (and probably cause) atherosclerosis and heart attacks. On the contrary, high levels of HDL cholesterol seem to be associated with fewer heart attacks:

- Women (with far less heart disease than men) have higher HDL levels than men.
- Populations with high heart attack

rates have lower than average HDL levels and vice versa.

• Heart attack victims generally have lower than average HDL levels.

• Laboratory animals that are resistant to heart disease have proportionally more HDL in their blood than susceptible animals.

Thus, there is increasing evidence that high levels of LDL cholesterol may lead to heart problems, while high HDL cholesterol may prevent them.

These findings have sparked interest in discovering how an individual could

alter the composition of the blood cholesterol increasing the HDL or "good" form and decreasing the LDL or "bad" form.

Some specific measures which have been shown to be effective in raising the HDL cholesterol are weight loss, regular endurance exercise, cessation of cigarette smoking and moderate drinking. The last of these should prove to be a popular form of therapy.

Perhaps the Jewish toast, "L'chaim," meaning "to life," holds greater significance than originally thought.



Jocelyn Krieger

Recollections of earlier marches by Nazis

Should the Nazis march in Detroit?

At one time, two Detroiters might have been able to answer that question. Now they are patients in a locked ward of a northwest Detroit nursing home.

I met Rachel and Rivka while distributing gifts before a holiday. Rivka sat surrounded by inane people who laugh continuously because life has become a joke.

Starting into space, Rivka rocked relentlessly, a behavior which began with the end of World War II when she learned her entire family had perished.

But without provocation, Rivka will lunge from her chair and proceed to strangle anyone within reach while shouting the only word anyone has ever heard her speak — "Nazis!"

"THIS IS RACHEL," said the nurse as she introduced me to the other patient I had come to visit. "Be careful because she becomes violent when she thinks anyone may be an enemy. The last thing she

remembers is getting on a train with her family when she was 16. The train went to Auschwitz."

As I hurried to leave this living remake of "Snakepit," I felt a tug on my sleeve.

"When does the train leave?" asked Rachel.

ASK THE question of Aaron, who lives in a suburb, and he will tell you: "God has always blessed America because America has always helped other people. Nazis can't be in America."

His smiling confident nature belies the fact that Aaron spent all his teen years as an Auschwitz inmate.

His wife never saw a concentration camp. Yet she seldom smiles. For more than 30 years of married life, her sleep has been disturbed by Aaron's screams as nightmares cause his body to break into a cold sweat.

"Everyone thinks he's such a happy man," says Aaron's wife. "I'm the only one who sees what hap-

pens to him in the middle of the night."

ASK ANOTHER Detroiters and she will probably shake her head as if to brush off the question. Just don't ask my naive question: "Do you have any children?"

I was married one week when the Nazis marched into our town in Poland. I was a midwife, and they would come to the house where I was delivering a baby.

Her voice grew quieter.

"The Nazis would take the new mother from her bed and hold her while they smashed the baby against the wall. My husband and I promised each other not to have children until after the war. Only in the concentration camp, the Nazis did medical experiments on my body. After the war, I was sterile."

ON THE FOURTH of July, I met an older woman

who extolled the virtues of American freedom. "You can't realize how good it is to raise children in this country," she said.

My mention of my 17-year-old son brought a smile to her face. "My son is 17," she began in what seemed an ordinary maternal conversation.

When I asked if her son was planning to go to college, the pleasant banter changed.

"No. My son is dead. The Nazis killed him in 1940."

Immediately I apologized for pursuing the conversation. "I didn't realize your son was dead," I explained. "You said he was 17."

"Yes," she nodded. "My son will always be 17." Should the Nazis march in Detroit? A good question.

1980 by Jocelyn Krieger. The writer is a Southfield resident, music teacher and actress in broadcast commercials.

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