

AMG HealthWise

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FAMILY PRACTICE

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SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL CHOLESTEROL EDUCATION MONTH

Why Blood Cholesterol Matters

Blood cholesterol plays an important part in deciding a person's risk of getting coronary heart disease (CHD). The higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk. Did you know that heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the United States? About a half million people die each year from heart attacks caused by CHD. Altogether 1.25 million heart attacks occur each year.

Even if your blood cholesterol level is close to the desirable range, you can lower it and reduce your risk of getting heart disease. Eating in a heart-healthy way, being physically active, and losing weight if you are overweight are things everyone can do to help lower their levels.

What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in your body and is used to help build cells. However, you don't need to eat cholesterol to stay healthy like you do with other nutrients. Your liver manufactures all the cholesterol you need.

The Blood Cholesterol — Heart Disease Connection

When you have too much cholesterol in your blood, the excess builds up on the walls of the arteries that carry blood to the heart. This buildup is called "atherosclerosis" or "hardening of the

arteries." It narrows the arteries and can slow down or block blood flow to the heart. With less blood, the heart gets less oxygen. With not enough oxygen to the heart, there may be chest pain ("angina" or "angina pectoris"), heart attack ("myocardial infarction"), or even death. Cholesterol buildup is the most common cause of heart disease, and it happens so slowly that you are not even aware of it. The higher your blood cholesterol, the greater your chance of this buildup.

Have Your Blood Cholesterol Checked

All adults age 20 and over should have their blood cholesterol (also called "total" blood cholesterol) checked at least once every 5 years. If an accurate HDL-cholesterol measurement is available, HDL should be checked at the same time. If you do not know your total HDL levels, ask your doctor to measure them at your next visit.

Total and HDL-cholesterol measurements require a blood sample that is taken from your arm or finger. You do not have to fast for this test.

Blood cholesterol levels of under 200 mg/dL are called "desirable" and put you at lower risk for heart disease. Any cholesterol level of 200 mg/dL or more increases your risk; over half the adults in the United States have levels of 200 mg/dL or greater. Levels between 200 and 239 mg/dL are "borderline-high." A level of 240 mg/dL or greater is "high"

blood cholesterol. A person with this level has more than twice the risk of heart disease compared to someone whose cholesterol is 200 mg/dL. About one out of every five American adults has high blood cholesterol of 240 mg/dL or greater.

Who Can Benefit From Lowering Blood Cholesterol?

Almost everyone can benefit from lowering his or her blood cholesterol. Lowering cholesterol slows the fatty buildup in the arteries, and in some cases can help reduce the buildup already there. And, if you have two or more other risk factors for heart disease or already have heart disease, you have a great deal to gain from lowering your high blood cholesterol. In this case, lowering your level may greatly reduce your risk of any more heart problems.

Many Americans have had success in lowering their blood cholesterol levels. From 1978 to 1990, the average blood cholesterol level in the U.S. dropped from 213 mg/dL to 205 mg/dL.

Continued on page 2...

Athens Medical Group would like to introduce you to the **AMG HealthWise** Newsletter. This publication is to advise you, our patient, of the latest news and information within our office. You can find it each month in our lobbies and in our patient rooms.

Keep the Beat — Cholesterol Counts for Everyone

Cholesterol Education, Continued from page 1...

Guidelines For Heart-Healthy Living

Whatever your blood cholesterol level, you can make changes to help lower it or keep it low and reduce your risk for heart disease. These are guidelines for heart-healthy living that the whole family can follow:

- Choose foods low in saturated fat.
- Choose foods low in total fat.
- Choose foods high in starch and fiber.
- Choose foods low in cholesterol.
- Be more physically active.
- Maintain a healthy weight, and lose weight if you are overweight.

The key to the dietary management of cholesterol is to reduce your intake of cholesterol and saturated fat. Cholesterol is found in animal products, so you should limit the amount of meats and dairy products that you eat -- eggs and organ meat (kidney and liver) are especially high in cholesterol. Avoid foods that are high in saturated fat, such as solid shortening, and palm and coconut oils, which are found in many commercially baked goods and snack foods.

Instead, choose low-fat, low-cholesterol foods, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, skim milk, skinless poultry, and dried peas and beans. Use monounsaturated (canola, olive, peanut) oils when cooking. To make healthy choices read nutrition labels carefully.

With your doctor's help, you can make few changes that will manage your cholesterol levels. And you may just find that you look and feel better, too.

Helmet Reminder

In bicycle accidents, most head injuries occur to the front of the head.

For this reason, it's critical to wear the helmet *level* on your head.

Resist the temptation to wear it with the front tipped up.



RIGHT



WRONG



Open Letter to our MEDICARE PATIENTS:

It is with sincere regret that Athens Medical Group can no longer provide lab services for the majority of lab tests performed by our facility.

The Health Care Finance Administration (HCFA) mandates we complete a two page Medicare Secondary Payer form to be signed by you for every Medicare patient lab encounter for which we file a claim.

We no longer have the resources to provide on-site convenience for lab services to our Medicare patients due to the burdensome, complex paperwork required.

Your lab test may be performed at the Athens Regional Medical Center at two locations:

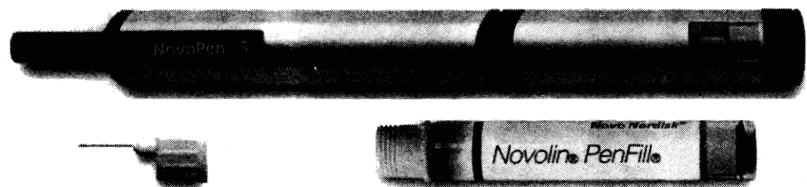
- 1) Outpatient Registration - Emergency Room
- 2) Athens Medical Mall - Outpatient Center

REMEMBER: You must take your Green Physician Order Form with you before you can have your lab work performed at Athens Regional Medical Center.

Thank you for your understanding and patience in this matter.

For Freedom at home, work and play . . .

New NovoPen®3 Insulin Delivery System The Anywhere Insulin



NovoFine 30
Disposable Needle,
30 gauge x 1/3" (8mm)

Human Insulin (recombinant DNA origin), 3mL cartridge
Available in N, R, and 70/30 formulations



Any change in insulin should be made cautiously and only under medical supervision.



Risk Factors for Heart Disease



A high blood cholesterol level is not the only thing that increases your chance of getting heart disease.

Here is a list of known risk factors:

- Factors You Can Do Something About
 - Cigarette smoking
 - High blood cholesterol (high total and LDL-cholesterol)
 - Low HDL-cholesterol
 - High blood pressure
 - Diabetes
 - Obesity/overweight
 - Physical inactivity
- Factors You Cannot Control
 - Age: - 45 years or older for men
- 55 years or older for women
 - Family history of early heart disease (heart attack or sudden death):
- Father or brother stricken before the age of 55
- Mother or sister stricken before the age of 65



The more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of heart disease. Fortunately, most of these risk factors are things you can do something about.

Tips To Help Older Americans Control Cholesterol

Just because you're over 65 doesn't mean you can ignore your cholesterol level. Lowering your cholesterol can help you stay healthy by reducing your risk for heart disease. If you have heart disease, lowering cholesterol can help you live longer and reduce your risk of having a heart attack. So make these cholesterol-lowering habits a part of your life:

Eat foods low in saturated fat, total fat and cholesterol. Good choices include fruits and vegetables, lowfat and fat-free dairy products, and whole grains.

Choose lean cuts of meat, skinless poultry, and fish.

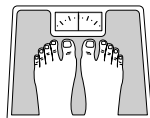


Be physically active. With your doctor's okay, try 30 minutes of moderate activity a day. Walking and dancing promote coordination, and light weight-lifting strengthens bones. Pressed for time? Divide those 30 minutes into three 10 minute sessions.



Maintain a healthy weight.

Being overweight raises your cholesterol and increases your risk of getting heart disease.



Take your medicine if prescribed. If your doctor has prescribed cholesterol-lowering medication for you, it is important that you take it every day in addition to following heart-healthy habits.



BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

- **Accounts for 60% to 70%** of all skin cancers.
- **Has a cure rate of 95%** when it's caught early and removed.
- **Occurs most often on the nose, forehead, and ears.**
- **Is usually found in people over age 45.**
- **Usually appears as a pearl-colored, semi-translucent bump** (dark-colored in African Americans) with a depressed center, or as a sore that won't heal.
- **Is caused mostly by exposure to sunlight.** Other causes: chemicals, (e.g., arsenic) or X-rays.
- **Rarely spreads to other parts of the body,** but it can extend below the skin, causing damage to the cartilage and bone.



The Lifetime Risk for Developing CORONARY HEART DISEASE (CHD)

The lifetime risk for Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is very high in the U.S. One out of every 2 men aged 40 and younger, and 1 out of every 3 women aged 40 and younger, will develop CHD sometime in their life. Even among men who reach 70 years of age without obvious CHD, 1 out of every 3 will develop the disease in the remaining lifespan; among women free of CHD at age 70, 1 out of every 4 will go on to have the disease. The American public can lower their average cholesterol level and reduce their risk for developing CHD by adopting heart-healthy life habits: reducing saturated fat and cholesterol in the diet, being physically active, and maintaining a healthy weight. For those with high cholesterol levels, cholesterol lowering under medical guidance is needed to reduce the risk for developing CHD.

Heart-Healthy Recipes



Mock-Southern Sweet Potato Pie

Crust:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1 - 1/4 cups flour | 1/4 cup white sugar | 3 large eggs, beaten |
| 1/4 tsp sugar | 1/4 cup brown sugar | 1/4 cup evaporated skim milk, canned |
| 1 cup skim milk | 1/2 tsp salt | 1 tsp vanilla extract |
| 2 Tbsp vegetable oil | 1/4 tsp nutmeg | 3 cups sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed |

Filling:

Preheat oven to 350° F.

- Crust:**
1. Combine the flour and sugar in a bowl.
 2. Add milk and oil to the flour mixture.
 3. Stir with fork until well mixed and then form pastry into a smooth ball with your hands.
 4. Roll the ball between two 12-inch squares of waxed paper using short, brisk strokes until pastry reaches edge of paper.
 5. Peel off top paper and invert crust into pie plate.

- Filling:**
1. Combine sugars, salt, spices, and eggs.
 2. Add milk and vanilla. Stir.
 3. Add sweet potatoes and mix well.
 4. Pour mixture into pie shell.
 5. Bake for 60 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Cool and cut into 16 slices.

Makes 16 servings. Serving size: 1 slice

Per serving: calories: 147; total fat: 3g; saturated fat: less than 1g; cholesterol: 40mg; sodium: 98mg

For more heart-healthy recipes from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), you may access free copies on the Internet at www.nhlbi.gov or call the NHLBI Information Center at 301/592-8573 to place a prepaid order.



"We can't live with my parents.
They're still living with their parents."

Reflections



"Be civil to all, sociable to many,
familiar with few, friend to one,
enemy to none."

— Benjamin Franklin

SEPTEMBER 20TH - 24TH, 1999

PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS WEEK

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men. One out of every 10 men will develop the disease at some time in his life -- most after age 65. Although it is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among men in the United States, prostate cancer can be treated successfully.

Prostate Gland: The prostate is a gland of the male reproductive system. It is rather small -- its weight only about an ounce, and its size and shape like that of a walnut. The prostate is located in front of the rectum, just below the bladder, and wraps around a tube called the urethra which carries urine from the bladder. It is made up largely of muscular and glandular tissues. The main function of the prostate is to produce the fluid that carries and nourishes sperm cells. Prostate cancer may stay confined to the prostate gland, may spread locally to other organs or may spread through the blood to distant organs.

Prostate Cancer Facts:

Incidence: Prostate cancer now surpasses lung cancer as the leading form of cancer in American men. An estimated 317,000 American men will get prostate cancer this year and more than 41,400 men will die from it. One man in nine will develop prostate cancer in his lifetime; the rate is one in 8 for

African-American men. Over the last decade, the number of deaths from prostate cancer has increased 50 percent.

Risk Factors: Men age 50 and older are at risk for prostate cancer, and the risk increases with age. The average age of men with the disease is 72. African Americans, for reasons still unknown, and men with a family history of prostate cancer are at highest risk for developing the disease.

Symptoms: Early prostate cancer usually has no symptoms. Some possible symptoms include weak or interrupted flow of urine; inability to urinate or difficulty in beginning to urinate; need to urinate frequently, especially at night; blood in urine or semen, and continuing pain in the lower back, pelvis or upper thighs.

Detection: A digital rectal exam (DRE) performed together with the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test is the most effective way to detect prostate cancer at an early and potentially curable stage. PSA is produced by both normal and cancerous prostate cells and it is measured in a blood sample. The higher the PSA level, the greater the chance a man has prostate cancer. It is recommended a baseline PSA test between the ages of 35 and 39 for high-risk men and a baseline PSA for normal-risk men between the ages of 45 and 49. A positive result from the PSA and DRE is usually followed by an ultrasound test and a needle biopsy to determine if cancer exists.

Treatment: If prostate cancer is detected in the early stages, treatment options are much broader, and the chances for a cure are much greater. Determining which course of treatment to follow is a choice that must be left to the patient and his physician, after weighing such considerations as the patient's age, health, stage of the disease and

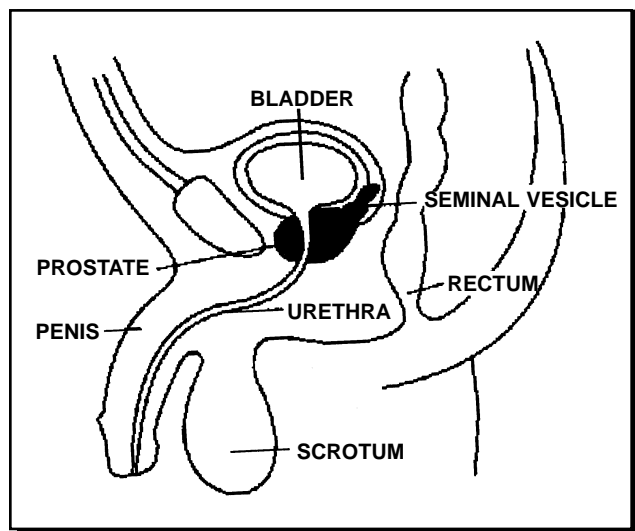
the "Gleason grade," or rate of growth. In some cases, particularly in older men where the cancer can be slow growing, the best option may be "watchful waiting," or monitoring the cancer without undertaking treatment. Other options include surgery (including cryosurgery) and radiation therapy (including brachytherapy, or radioactive seed implantation).

Outlook: Increased awareness and early detection prove to have a positive impact. Currently, 58 percent of all prostate cancer cases are detected while the cancer is still localized and at its most curable stage. This shows that men are improving their knowledge of the disease and gaining an advantage through early detection.

Because early prostate cancer usually does not have any symptoms, it is extremely difficult to detect without testing. In fact, screenings using both PSA and DRE tests have proven to be the only reliable method of identifying the disease when it can be cured most easily. However, some typical indications of prostate cancer are: weak or interrupted urine flow; inability to urinate or difficulty stopping or starting the urine flow; the need to urinate frequently, especially at night; blood in the urine or semen; burning or pain on urination, and continuing pain in the lower back, pelvis, or upper thighs.

Because there is no cure for advanced prostate cancer, early diagnosis and treatment are essential. Asymptomatic men can 'choose to know' if they have prostate cancer so that they can 'know to choose' from treatment alternatives that can cure their cancer.

Women are often the ones to encourage the men in their lives to have these exams. That's why it is important for women -- as well as men -- to be educated about this life-threatening disease.



AMG HealthWise

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