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by Jacob Teitelbaum, MD
www.Vitality101.com

Natural Approaches to Heart Health

Below are 3 sections on treating key heart issues naturally. I hope you and your patients find them helpful. Feel free to use these as patient instruction sheets as well.

Cholesterol

Background

It is important to recognize that even though cholesterol gets a lot of attention, it is not necessarily the most important (or even an especially significant) factor in preventing heart disease. Other factors, such as nutritional support and optimizing thyroid function, may also decrease the risk of heart attack.

Although the cholesterol-lowering medications in use today can be lifesaving in those who have *already* had a heart attack or have angina, they only decrease heart attack deaths by 1.4% in those without a previous heart attack (called "primary prevention"), and they are not without risks. Some of these include muscle pain, liver inflammation, and depletion of the nutrient coenzyme Q10. This nutritional deficiency can then contribute to fatigue and congestive heart failure, and I believe that anybody on one of the Mevacor family of cholesterol-lowering medications (most are) should take 200 mg a day of coenzyme Q10.

To put that 1.4% benefit in perspective, let's look at other research. Women whose thyroid blood tests show their thyroid function to be on the low side of *normal* were at a 69% increased risk of heart attack death. In another study, non-cat-owners were 30% more likely than cat-owners to die of a heart attack. This makes owning a cat over 20 times more effective than cholesterol medications for preventing heart attacks (which is the purpose of lowering cholesterol).

So why all the push for using cholesterol medicines? Could it be because they sell well over \$10 billion worth yearly?

In the absence of underlying heart disease or a cholesterol under 250, a good argument could be made to skip the cholesterol-lowering medications.

Treatment

1. Begin with an exercise program and, if overweight, bring your weight down
2. In men, especially if you are overweight, have high blood pressure, and have diabetes (or are prediabetic), this may *all* be coming from too low a testosterone level. If your total testosterone is under 450 on the blood test, I would consider using prescription natural testosterone (AndroGel or Testim or compounded) to bring your level up over 700.
3. In women, consider a trial of prescription natural Armour Thyroid – even if the labs are normal. High cholesterol is often caused by low thyroid, and the tests are horribly unreliable (they miss the majority of those who need thyroid hormone).
4. Enjoy eating your eggs and cholesterol – study after study shows that eating 6 eggs a day for 6 weeks has no effect on cholesterol blood levels. Yet this myth persists. Avoid saturated fats (hard fats) and margarine (butter is much healthier and tastier than margarine).
5. Eat 1 to 3 cloves of garlic a day. Crushed into olive oil, it makes a yummy treat that may drop your cholesterol. In addition, have a cereal with oats (such as Life, Cheerios, Quaker Oats Squares) for breakfast. Simply adding garlic and oats to your diet can lower your cholesterol almost as much as many medications.
6. Herbals can be quite effective as well at *maintaining* a healthy cholesterol level. I recommend a product called Chol-Less that contains inositol hexaniacinate (flush-free niacin), berberine, chromium, artichoke, policosanol, and deodorized garlic. (It is available at www.vitality101.com.)
7. If triglycerides are also elevated, be especially sure to avoid sweets and add acetyl-L-carnitine 1,000 mg a day to the above for 3 months to see if it lowers the triglycerides.
8. If on cholesterol-lowering medications (statins), be sure to take coenzyme 10 (200 mg a day). I use the Enzymatic Therapy *chewable* brand, as quality is an issue for coenzyme Q10).

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

Background

The heart is a muscle that acts as a pump to send blood around the body. When it gets damaged by attacks or infections (cardiomyopathy), has a malfunctioning valve, or grows too big (for example, from long-standing and untreated high blood pressure), it may no longer be able to pump blood effectively. When this happens, the blood backs up in the lungs or legs, which are upstream from the heart. This causes swelling in the ankles (which persists when you wake in the morning – mild swelling at night is common even in healthy people). When you lie flat, fluid then backs up in the lungs. This causes people to need to sleep on many pillows and to wake up short of breath during the night. CHF also causes shortness of breath with exertion.

Treatment

Treating the underlying high blood pressure, valve problem, or angina is important. I rarely see heart valve surgery recommended unnecessarily, and cardiologists are very good with this issue. Follow your physician's advice for lowering blood pressure as well.

Fortunately, natural remedies do an excellent job at improving heart muscle efficiency, and even modest improvements can improve function dramatically. I recommend this four-part recipe for anyone with heart disease (unless you have associated kidney failure, in which case the magnesium part of the treatment should be monitored by your physician).

1. **Ribose** (Corvalen brand): This powder that looks and tastes like sugar is a key to energy production in the body – including the heart. I recommend 1 scoop (5 gm) 3 times a day for 6 weeks, then 2 times a day. This nutrient is outstanding for heart disease and is the most important one. You will likely be amazed after 6 weeks on it! (For a detailed discussion on ribose, see "Ribose – to Turbo Charge Energy Production" at www.vitality101.com.)
2. **Coenzyme Q10** (use Enzymatic Therapy or Vitaline brand *chewable* wafers – brand and form are critical for this nutrient): Take 200–400 mg/day (I would take 400 mg/day for 6 weeks, then 200 mg/day). This nutrient is especially critical for anyone on cholesterol-lowering medications, even if there is no heart problem, as these medications cause coenzyme Q10 deficiency, and this nutrient is critical for energy production. (For a detailed discussion, see "CoEnzyme Q10 and Energy Production" at www.Vitality101.com.)
3. **Magnesium 200 mg/day and B Complex**: 50+ mg/day. I would get these plus more than 40 other key nutrients easily by taking Energy Revitalization System vitamin powder and B Complex (from ITI-Integrative Therapeutics Inc.). Take 1 scoop a day, but if it causes gas or loose stools, you can decrease the powder to ½ scoop a day. Magnesium not only increases your heart muscles strength, but also markedly decreases the tendency to abnormal heart rhythms.
4. **Acetyl-L-Carnitine**: 500 mg 2 times a day for 6 weeks, then 500 mg/day is enough (and it can often simply be

stopped). (For more information, see "Acetyl-L-Carnitine" at www.Vitality101.com.)

Give these nutrients a 6-week trial to see the optimal effects. The benefits for heart health are often dramatic! The products are readily available in most health food stores, and at www.Vitality101.com.

Hypertension

Background

Hypertension, which occurs when the blood pressure in your arteries is too high, can lead to blood-vessel diseases such as strokes, heart attacks, and leg pain caused during walking. As hypertension does not cause any symptoms until the damage is already done, it is important to occasionally have your blood pressure checked. Although it is sometimes necessary to use medications to keep your blood pressure under control, this can often also be done naturally. In my experience, the best approach is to use medications to initially bring your blood pressure under control. Once it is normalized, natural therapies can often keep your blood pressure at a healthy level and allow your physician to wean you off the medications.

Unlike cholesterol medicines, which may be more harmful than helpful for most people, blood pressure medications actually do save a lot of lives. If you do have elevated blood pressure, I recommend adding (or continuing) the medications to lower the pressure, and then using the natural treatments below. After three months, you'll often find that you can taper off your medications and still maintain a healthy blood pressure.

For starters, let's look at some of the major reversible causes of hypertension. These include:

- **Being Overweight.** To lose the weight, see my article on metabolic therapies for weight loss: http://www.endfatigue.com/health_articles_d-e/Diet-what_to_do_when_you_cant_lose_weight.html. Be sure to also begin an exercise program, as this also helps lower high blood pressure. Best to do a walking program outdoors, as the vitamin D from sunshine can actually help lower high blood pressure.
- **Metabolic Syndrome.** If you are male, overweight, have high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol, and perhaps even have insulin resistance or diabetes, you probably have metabolic syndrome. This is often caused by a low testosterone level (even if it is in the low normal range, for example a total testosterone level of 450), and simply taking natural testosterone (by prescription) can reverse all of the above problems while leaving you feeling much better! If you are male and over 40 and have high blood pressure, I invite you to read the article on my website "Treating Low Testosterone Naturally": http://www.endfatigue.com/health_articles_f-n/Hormones-can_testosterone_be_good_for_you.html. It could make you feel much better, restore optimal sexual function, and save your life.
- **Excess Alcohol or Caffeine.** Try leaving these off for two weeks and then recheck your blood pressure.
- **Sleep Apnea.** Consider checking whether you have this condition if you're overweight and you snore.



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- **Food allergies** can also trigger high blood pressure. If your pulse or temperature regularly goes up after you eat, consider allergy desensitization using NAET (Nambudripad Allergy Elimination Technique; see www.NAET.com). You can also try an elimination diet to see if your pressure goes down.
- **White coat hypertension.** Some people's blood pressure shoots up whenever they see a doctor. For many, this is the only time it goes up, so they end up being treated for high blood pressure when they don't have it. Many grocery store and drugstore pharmacies have a blood pressure machine for the public (you actually sit in it), which you can use as well. Check three readings each visit (one right after the other) to make sure that they are consistent. After you get used to the blood-pressure machines, you may find that your numbers are lower.

Natural Treatments to Lower High Blood Pressure

If you are overweight, bringing your weight down by diet and exercise can be a very effective way to lower your blood pressure. Other dietary manipulations can also be helpful. These include having a high-fiber, low-fat, and low-sugar diet. Avoiding excess alcohol consumption can also be helpful. For a low-salt diet to actually lower your blood pressure, your salt intake must be so low as to be unsustainable – and I think downright dangerous. Because of this, I would simply moderate salt intake comfortably.

Correcting nutritional deficiencies can also be very helpful in lowering high blood pressure. Take the following:

- **Energy Revitalization System** vitamin powder for optimal levels of vitamins A, C, and D plus magnesium.
- **Calcium** 500–1,000 mg. Take it at bedtime and consider taking part of the dose at dinner.
- **Potassium.** The amount of potassium found in one banana and 1 cup of tomato or V8 juice a day can also normalize blood pressure.
- **Coenzyme Q10.** 200 milligrams a day can also be very effective. I have seen it lower blood pressure as much as 30 to 40 points in some severe cases. Coenzyme Q10 deficiency is especially common in people taking cholesterol-lowering medications.
- **Dark Chocolate.** Although it only lowers blood pressure by 3-4 mm, it tastes good and is high in healthy antioxidants!

In addition, don't forget the mind/body component. Some of us are like pressure cookers, and when we close down our "steam release valve," the pressure builds up inside us. We may look calm on the outside but actually have high blood pressure on the inside. Give yourself permission to have a good hissy fit once in a while to blow off steam. It can help your elevated blood pressure to come down.

We are excited about our new, free iPhone application, called "Natural Cures." For those with iPhones, this new application is an excellent pocket resource. It supplies information on how to use the best of natural and prescription therapies for over 100 health topics, while also discussing which medications should be avoided (for example, see the "statin" discussion above). It also includes a nutrition reference, newsletter, and much more. We are very pleased that over 1,600 people a day (over 150,000 to date) have downloaded it. ♦

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