



It's not just for geriatrics anymore

Students are at risk for high cholesterol too

by Bonnie Uchman

Many students find out accidentally that they have high cholesterol.

"Students are usually having a blood test for something else," said Lisa Cavaretta, the Student Health Center's registered dietician. "When they're told their cholesterol level is too high, they're shocked."

Cholesterol is a fatty substance that builds up in the lining of the arteries and can eventually lead to strokes, heart attacks and other diseases.

Cavaretta said college

students are not too young to start thinking about cholesterol. "In fact, not only should someone who's 18 be concerned, but even children can have high cholesterol levels," she said.

Studies show that overconsumption of fat, cholesterol and calories is the major factor underlying high cholesterol and heart disease. Modest dietary changes can lower cholesterol levels. A 10- or 15-percent decrease in cholesterol level will reduce the estimated risk of coronary heart disease by 20 to 30 percent.

Students should not worry so much about eating cholesterol, but should limit the "fat" they consume.

"Your body produces about 1,000 milligrams of cholesterol each day," Cavaretta said. "If your diet is high in fat even if it's not high in cholesterol, your body may produce too much cholesterol."

Animal fats are the ones to avoid as much as possible. These include butter, dairy fat, cheese, whole milk products and the fat on meat.

If there is a problem with high cholesterol Cavaretta recommends

looking at the kinds of fats in the diet.

Cavaretta said, "Obviously if they are eating a lot of desserts, fried foods and fast foods that are high in fat, the first thing I would do is gradually cut back on fat."

What about fast-food, the staples of a college students diet?

"Fast food is ok if you're smart," Cavaretta said. "A regular hamburger at Burger King has less fat than the Whaler (which is a fried fish sandwich.) And a Taco Salad at Taco Bell has over 60 grams of fat because of the fried shell, the sour cream, the guacamole and

the olives.

Students are better off getting tacos or tamales, she said. The fat content of a hamburger can be cut in half by not adding bacon or cheese.

Cavaretta said that she is concerned that students don't get reliable and accurate information about nutrition. September, as National Cholesterol Month, is the perfect time to learn the facts.

The Student Health Center offers free nutritional handouts. In addition, Cavaretta conducts a Wisdom in Nutrition (WIN) class on Wednesdays at 2 p.m.

The Student Health Center's radio show "Time Out for Health," is broadcast on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. on KUNV. The program will also talk about cholesterol this month.

NOTE: The Student Health Center will be offering discounted cholesterol screenings for students only through the end of the month. Students can get a \$4 cholesterol test or a \$10 lipid panel at the Student Health Center daily 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. This is a fasting blood test—you must not have anything to eat or drink 12 hours prior to drawing the specimen.

Quick look at fast foods shows healthful change

The fast-food restaurant is changing. Check it out.

"We used to caution against eating almost any kind of fast food because of the high-fat, high cholesterol content," said Virginia Train, R.D., nutrition committee chairman for the American Heart Association, Nevada Affiliate, Las Vegas Division. "Now, there are healthy choices, even if you are on the go."

Americans continue to be on the go. According to a national survey, "What America Eats," one out of three American adults eat take-out food at home, most frequently picking something up for dinner after work. One in four American adults eat take-out food at lunch.

"We're not likely to change these eating habits," Train said, "but we would like to encourage healthy habits for those on the go."

During the American Heart Association's annual Food Festival Week (Sept. 22-28), tips on shopping the fast food market are available through the AHA.

The overall objective is to trim the fat and cut the cholesterol intake, therefore reducing a person's risk of developing heart disease.

The good news is that many dine-in and take-out restaurants have joined the heart health crusade, offering salad bars, pasta and rice dishes and low-fat dairy

products.

"Having heart healthy choices on the fast-food menus is not enough," said the registered dietician. "We have to exercise our options wisely—selecting foods that are low in fat and cholesterol."

According to the national survey, hamburger, pizza and fried chicken are the top three take-out foods. These items tend to be high

in fat, cholesterol and calories, a hazardous combination for those who want to lower heart disease risk.

The AHA urges you to exercise your options whether you are 'driving through' or 'dining in'.

Remember to ask for low-calorie salad dressing.

Try baked potatoes with vegetable or yogurt toppings.

Go for the grilled rather than fried meats and choose

the smaller portions. Ask them to hold the cheese and mayonaisse.

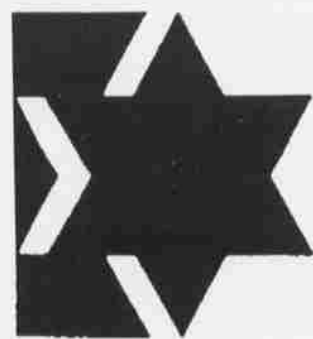
Beware of the double-decker burgers and milkshakes.

Ask for skimmed milk.

Fast foods can be nutritious and delicious. How you approach the subject and what you choose is the key.

Correction

A front page story in the Sept. 19 issue stated that Student Services Director Mike Quick was a senator. However, Quick has resigned his seat.



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