**Fat and Cholesterol – Part 1 of 3 - History**

Is fat good or bad? Is Cholesterol good or bad? Both of those words are very subjective so what is all the fuss about anyway? Is fat needed – Yes, is the type of fat critical – Yes, are fats created equal – No.

A little history on how we got to where we are today. In the late 1950’s President Eisenhower was diagnosed with heart disease. The physicians were connecting heard disease to sugar consumption and the sugar industry said “no you don’t” and they pointed to saturated fat as the problem. And here is when the vilification of saturated fat stared. Fast forward into the 1970’s and nutrition researcher Ancel Keys picked up that torch and was on a vendetta against saturated fat, the reason for that would fill this article over multiple pages so I am going to leave it at that, he was so convinced that saturated fat was so bad that he started **cherry picking** his information from research all over the world to prove what he thought was right - that saturated fat is the worst thing possible. He was so successful with his campaign that the early food producers switched from using beef tallow and other animal fats to vegetable oils, and by 1984 Time Magazine ran with a cover implying saturated fat from animal products is bad. Fast forward 20 years and in 2014 Time Magazine has reversed their position with the new research and published a cover with Eat Butter on it. I wonder what the cover will say in 2024 or in 2044.

The question is: Have we learned anything about fat from the 1950’s to 2019? The answer is Yes we have.

* Our bodies are designed to run on fat
* There is more energy in fat than from carbohydrates or protein.
* We think more clearly, we are satiated longer throughout the day, and our waistlines are smaller when we eat **healthy** fats

There is so much evidence out there about fat and how good it is for us that Dr. Mark Hyman wrote a book to dispel all of the nonsense started by Ancel Keys and to educate people on the truths about fat in his book “*Eat Fat Get Thin*”. We have been indoctrinated for decades to think fat is bad for us; this belief that fat is bad is so pervasive in our Culture that you may have some strong opinions about this and think anything to the contrary is false. What I ask is that you keep an open mind.

Lets go back further in history for a moment, what types of fats did people have prior to the Industrial Revolution or even further back in the Paleo era? Here on the Alberta Plains it was most likely primarily buffalo fat and, on the coast, it was seal or whale fat. Did our ancestors have large pot bellies or damaged cardiovascular systems? Archeological evidence says no however they are not 100% sure either.

What we do know today through clinical research and what is being acknowledged is that saturated fat is needed for a healthy body and for a fully functioning healthy brain. Fact: If you took your brain out of your head, put on the counter let it dry out, over 30% of what is left over is fat/cholesterol.

In part 2 and 3 I will go further into the subject of fat and they can be found online at WEBSITE HERE. Please Join me on Wednesday February 6, 2018 for a health talk about fat and how it impacts our lives. February is also heart month so please come and discover some truly heart healthy fats.

To your vibrant health and vibrant life

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**Fat and Cholesterol – Part 2 of 3 – Cholesterol and Oxidative Stress**

What is cholesterol anyway? Cholesterol are two types of fat produced by the liver that you may have heard of: LDL and HDL. I want to get this out right here, neither is good nor bad, they have different functions is all and when levels get outside the norm that is an indication of something serious going on in the body. What are the functions of LDL and HDL?. When inflammation (fire) occurs in the body LDL is sent out to put out the flames, if there is lots of inflammation then lots of LDL is needed. Think about a house fire, one maybe two fire trucks are sent to put the fire out. Now think if the whole block was on fire more fire trucks would be needed. LDL are the fire trucks and personnel.

What about HDL? HDL is the clean up crew after the fire, once the inflammation is put out HDL is circulated to pick up the used LDL and transport it back to the liver to be refreshed. FACT: Your body creates 75% of the cholesterol needed daily, 25% comes from diet. Knowing this, if you have high cholesterol I would suggest looking at your diet and lifestyle to see where the inflammation is coming from.

What causes inflammation? Free radicals cause oxidation and damage tissues, this is the root cause of inflammation. What causes free radicals? That is a discussion for a metabolic chemistry lecture Suffice it to say free radicals are volatile particles that want to steal electrons for others so that they can be neutralized. The more free radicals in your body the more inflammation you will have and the higher your LDL cholesterol levels may go.

What is a person with high cholesterol supposed to do then? Find the root cause.

If you or someone in your family has cardiovascular issues like hardened arteries, or a heart attack is possible, or perhaps someone you know has non-alcoholic fatty liver. All of these are warning signs of high levels of oxidized LDL. The really great thing about this is your doctor can check for LDL, HDL and oxidized LDL in a simple blood test and diet and lifestyle can be changed to bring the levels down.

The answer is something you have already heard, I’m sure of it - to reduce oxidative stress and oxidized LDL in the body a diet rich in colourful plant-based foods is the best of the best with some great fats as well. The bright and dark colours of the fruits and veggies is what you want more of in your life as well as some moderate exercise. This is the basic prescription for reducing inflammation and all its causes.

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**Fat and Cholesterol – Part 3 of 3 – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**

To bring this together are all fats created equal? No. Are saturated fats good for us? Yes. Are some unsaturated fats good for us? Yes. I realize this may be very contradictory to what you believe, please remember where that belief originated from, Ancel Keys in the 1970’s when he vilified saturated fat and raised unsaturated fat onto a pedestal of health and wellness. All you have to do is look around and see the state that people are in, we are sicker now than ever before. Fat is not the only aspect of this decline, obviously, however it is a part of it.

Unsaturated fat covers monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils. Under the banner of healthy oils here are some sources: Avocado, Nuts, Seeds, Olive Oil, Sunflower Oil, hemp, flax, eggs and different types of fish like salmon sardines and mackerel. All of these listed have proven positive health effects and have Omega 3, 6 and or 9 within them and it is important to have more of these in your diet. Under the banner of unhealthy oils are vegetable oils. Vegetable oils go rancid very quickly. Just about every vegetable oil on the shelf in the super market right now has already gone bad and is rancid. Vegetable oils are also very high in Omega 6, Omega 6 is an essential fatty acid however when consumed in excess it causes inflammation. Most North Americans consume 20 – 30 times the amount of Omega 6 to Omega 3. To much Omega 6 and here is another source of inflammation. Omega 3 to 6 need to be consumed in a 1:1 ratio. Omega 9 is not necessary to get from diet as the body will create Omega 9 when needed.

Saturated fats are very stable also fall under both banners. Under healthy sources are coconut oil, palm oil, products from grass fed cattle: beef, butter, whole milk and cheese. Another healthy source of saturated fat comes from chocolate. Under the unhealthy sources of saturated fat is from animals that are grain fed. Interesting fact, the differences between grass fed and grain fed beef are many; here are some of the benefits of getting your fat from grass fed beef: Higher Omega 3 content, highest source of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) , also has the highest precursor to vitamin A and E.

The most important idea when looking at fat is where did it come from, is it a stable fat, am I balancing Omega 3 and 6. The other aspect is how much to eat daily. If you are looking to release weight, eat more healthy fats and get the best source of CLA you can get, which, as of current research, only found in grass fed beef. I mention CLA because it has the ability to control hunger, increase the bodies fat burning capability and so much more.

When are bodies are reconditioned to burn fat instead of sugar/glucose, the mind can become sharper, the body has more energy, by default you will eat less, cravings for sugary foods will decrease, the 3 pm crash is less likely to occur. Fat helps keep blood sugar levels very steady.

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