Cholesterol — “Bad,” Exercise — GOOD

Exercise is one of the best methods to lower cholesterol.

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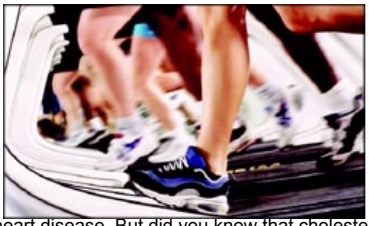

Cholesterol has enjoyed a bad reputation as a risk factor for heart disease. But did you know that cholesterol is needed by the body as a building block for the formation of certain hormones, and it is important to our cell membranes?

This bad reputation — duly deserved or not — does have at least one positive effect. It can prompt us to make a change for the good, a life-preserving, lifestyle change for the good.

If you’re one of the 37 million Americans who have high cholesterol, or one of the 105 million with elevated cholesterol, indeed you are not alone, but know too that these are indeed serious warning signs of a potential heart attack or stroke. Nevertheless, the simple fact that you are aware of your cholesterol levels and poised to do something about it can make all the difference in the world.

You may be able to effectively lower your blood cholesterol through lifestyle changes, which include diet, exercise, and stopping smoking. In addition, medications can also be used to produce effective results.Your physician will be able to recommend the most appropriate strategy to help your condition and may refer you to a physical therapist for guidance in an exercise program.

Depending upon the source, in order for exercise to positively impact cholesterol levels, you may need to be physically active anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes, as often as five to seven days per week. Since most Americans are consuming more calories and getting heavier, there is a tendency to recommend greater duration and frequency of activity.Your own personal fitness level including your age, weight, and height, calorie intake, and current level of daily activity, and intensity of the activity affects how many minutes of physical activity you need. In addition, if you are obese (20 to 25 percent in women) or over the maximum weight desirable for your height, you will need to exercise more than what’s needed to lower your blood cholesterol and risk for coronary heart disease.

Success in any effective exercise regime is achieved when other factors are considered. Is the activity something you enjoy, or is it about as much fun as getting a tooth pulled? Are you able to motivate yourself, or is this an activity you can do more easily with others? Do you have the time in your day to carve out and devote to exercise, or is it best to incorporate it into your daily schedule?

Exercise is cumulative, so add it up.The lunch break that incorporates brisk walking for the last 25 minutes – coupled with the fairly rigorous 35 minutes of housecleaning cumulatively adds up to an hour…all without going to the gym. If the gym is your way of committing yourself to the lifestyle, then vary your workout by using the treadmill, exercise bikes and weights/resistance training. Each has its place in helping reduce blood cholesterol and obtaining the other beneficial effects of exercise. Once again, let us stress the importance of consulting with your physician before embarking on any exercise regimen. Here’s to life!

Renker Wellness Center Membership: $60 per month (includes full use of facilities and all classes) $75 initial evaluation fee Hours: Monday - Friday: 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. (closed 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.) Saturday: 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. Sunday: Closed For more information on exercise, the Renker Wellness Center, or finding a personal trainer, contact the Renker Wellness Center at 760-773-2030.

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