

MEDIA RELEASE

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Lowering cholesterol with or without medicine = big health benefit

Losing as little as five to 10 kilograms can make a big difference to your cholesterol levels and significantly reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke, according to Professor David Colquhoun writing in the October issue of *Australian Prescriber*.

“If these improvements can be made through changes to diet, weight loss, exercise and the use of special nutrient-rich or fibre-rich foods, there may be no need to take cholesterol-lowering medicines,” he says.

People can respond to diet within four to six weeks, lowering their low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol by up to 30 percent. This translates into a significant reduction in the risk of heart attack.

Professor Colquhoun, a cardiologist from Wesley Medical Centre, and Greenslopes Private Hospital, Brisbane, says replacing animal fat with carbohydrate or foods rich in unsaturated fats and choosing high fibre foods are effective ways to lower cholesterol. He also advises that half an hour of exercise most days of the week can lower cholesterol by 10 percent.

“Traditional eating habits such as a Mediterranean diet or Japanese-style diet are associated with low LDL cholesterol and low rates of heart disease,” he says.

If cholesterol targets are still not met, Professor Colquhoun recommends taking medicines called statins. “They are the most convenient and effective medicines for lowering cholesterol,” he says.

However, these medicines do have side effects in some individuals, particularly the elderly and those with kidney failure or diabetes. There are other medicines available for people who cannot tolerate statins.

For the complete article visit the Australian Prescriber website www.australianprescriber.com

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For further information or interviews with the author contact Elayn James on 02 8217 8700 (bh), 0419 618 365 or ejames@nps.org.au

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