

Outlook on Lifestyle

DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

Finding a cure for heart disease

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

Coronary artery disease, the cause of heart attacks, is a major health problem worldwide. Researchers in many laboratories are trying to discover the process by which coronary arteries age, become narrowed and eventually block off, resulting in myocardial infarction (heart attack).

This much is known: As people grow older, the linings of their arteries become roughened and irregular, a far cry from the Teflon-smooth arterial linings of children. The primary cause of this alteration has been

shown to be the atheromatous plaque, a sticky hodge-podge deposit that acts very much like a grimy spot of creosote in a smooth flue. While they slowly build up over the years, these plaques — which are composed of cholesterol, protein and cellular debris — cause an irritation within the arterial lining. The irritation attracts white blood cells that attempt to dislodge the deposit, as they would try to destroy any other foreign material in the body.

Because of its rough unevenness, the plaque also attracts platelets, the tiny blood cells that form the basis of blood clots. When enough platelets adhere to the shaggy and tacky plaque, a clot forms, further blocking the artery, slowing blood flow and enlarging to fill the arterial opening. Once the artery is severely narrowed, heart cramps (angina) can appear; once the artery is completely occluded, myocardial infarction is a certainty.

Until the last few years, scientists believed that the endothelium (arterial lining) acted primarily as a coating for the deeper, muscular layers of the artery. Being a delicate, single membrane barely one cell thick, the endothelium was regarded simply as a

sheet through which hormones, nutrients and waste products passively diffused. Recent studies have shown that this view was incorrect. New discoveries have opened up a whole new realm of information that may eventually lead to a practical preventative for heart attacks.

Among other functions, the endothelium has been shown to participate actively in a complex series of metabolic reactions, all of which influence the tone or state of contraction of the artery. These functions include:

- the uptake and destruction of epinephrine (adrenalin) and serotonin, two powerful natural chemicals that cause constriction of blood vessels;
- the conversion of angiotensin I to angiotensin II, another powerful constrictor of arteries;
- the breakdown of bradykinin, a potent dilator of arteries, to inactive compounds;
- the release of a group of substances called "endothelium-derived relaxing factor" (EDRF), a vigorous dilator of arteries.

Thus, to the endothelium falls the job of balancing strong chemicals that either widen arteries or constrict

them. Nature seems to have provided an intricate protective mechanism by which the endothelium of the coronary arteries reacts to injury or to blood-clot formation by stimulating the muscle layers to relax — allowing for healing as well as for a flushing out of any blockage.

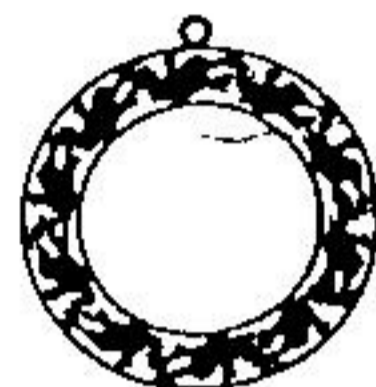
When the endothelial lining is disrupted, as is the case with an atheromatous plaque, the defense mechanism is neutralized; a clot grows and heart attack ensues. This relation has been unequivocally demonstrated in a number of studies that have linked abnormal endothelial function to arterial spasm, especially in arteriosclerotic coronary arteries with fixed obstruction. In one study, the intravenous administration of a coronary dilator (acetylcholine) actually caused arterial constriction in patients with atheromatous plaques, showing that the relaxing effects of EDRF were inoperative.

At present, there is no practical application for these intriguing findings. About all we can do is to maintain healthful lifestyles: exercise regularly, reduce dietary fat, stop smoking, stay trim — in short, try to retard the inevitable build-up of atheromatous plaques in our rusting pipes.

However, doctors are hoping that before too long, scientists will develop ways of sealing the endothelium of our coronary arteries, thereby en-

couraging our own astonishing defense mechanisms to protect us from coronary artery disease. Of course, the implications of such a breakthrough are staggering; other vascular diseases, as well as asthma and emphysema, have been shown to depend on endothelial integrity. The secret of curing these afflictions may lie in the deceptively simple and proletarian lining of blood vessels, to which no one paid much attention until recently.

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POLLY'S POINTERS



Polly Fisher

Should she dilute chicken broth?

By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — When a recipe calls for chicken broth, should I dilute the canned, condensed chicken broth or use it at full strength, right from the can? — C.H.

DEAR C.H. — Depending on the recipe and your own taste, the condensed broth may either be diluted or used full strength. A richer, fuller-flavored product will result if the broth is full strength, especially when it's an ingredient in sauces or casseroles. However, when making soups, I generally dilute the condensed broth at least partially, since using it full strength often results in an overly salty soup.

You can make your own chicken broth easily and store it in your freezer so it's always on hand. Just follow any good chicken soup recipe, strain the broth and pack it in freezer containers; label and freeze. I usually use 2- and 4-cup containers, since these are handy quantities. But you could also freeze it in ice cube trays if you use very small amounts frequently. Make whatever quantity is convenient for you.

I prefer to make broth with a minimum of salt, then season my finished dish to taste. That way, there's no danger of ending up with an overly salty soup, sauce or casserole.

I'm sending you a copy of my newsletter "Hot and Hearty Soups," which includes an excellent chicken soup recipe that can be used for broth, along with soups that have prepared or homemade chicken broth as a base, such as Pumpkin Peanut Soup and cream of vegetable.

DEAR POLLY — When cleaning Venetian blinds, use a large paper clip to keep track of which slats have been cleaned. Clean several slats starting at the top, then attach the paper clip to the last slat you cleaned. Clean down several more, and move the paper clip down. Continue this way until you reach the bottom slat. It is easier than trying to keep count in your mind. — NINA

DEAR NINA — What a simple but useful tip for those with blinds in their homes — especially the fashionable and lovely mini-blinds. Your helpful pointer earns you the Pointer of the Week award, a copy of my book "Polly's Pointers: 1,081 Helpful Hints for Making Everything Last Longer." Others may order it for \$6.50. Make your check payable to POLLY'S POINTERS and send to POLLY'S POINTERS, P.O. Box 93863, Cleveland, OH 44101-5863. — POLLY

DEAR POLLY — To make a great clothespin holder, I take an empty 1-

gallon bleach jug and cut a hole in the pouring side large enough to comfortably put my hand in. I then fill the jug with clothespins. I cut a piece out of the handle near the bottom, taking away about 1 inch of the handle and leaving the rest as a hook. This allows the jug to be hung on the clothesline. To make it more attractive, I use pretty contact paper to decorate the jug.

These jugs are also handy to put yarn in while crocheting or knitting. The yarn can be run through the spout while you work, preventing it from tangling or rolling away. — ALICE

Polly will send you a Polly Dollar (\$1) if she uses your favorite Pointer, Peave or Problem in her column. Write POLLY'S POINTERS in care of this newspaper.

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ASK KATHY

Dear KATHY

I've always heard that sugar is fattening, and yet I just read where it contains only 16 calories per teaspoon. It would seem to me that you would have to eat quite a bit to really gain weight. Should I really be that concerned and try to avoid sugar?

Reply

Like many other foods, the problem with sugar is not so much the number of calories it contains, but the reaction it causes in your body. When you eat sugar, it is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. As your blood sugar rises, your body reacts by secreting insulin. Insulin drives sugar from the bloodstream, and promotes its storage as fat when it's not needed for immediate energy. The more sugar you eat, the stronger the insulin reaction and the more likely you are to store the calories you consume in the form of fat. And don't forget it's not the teaspoons of sugar you add to foods that add to the calories. It's all those teaspoons of sugar found in desserts, candies,



KATHY HAJAS
Diet Center Counselor

cereals and beverages that add up so quickly.

At Diet Center we teach you how food affects your body and how to make wise food selections. Making informed decisions about what foods you eat is the first step on the road to weight loss and permanent weight maintenance. Call Diet Center, or come in today for a free consultation and let our counselors help you get on the road to better nutrition.

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Home Post Scripts

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By Glenda Hughes, Sales Rep.

For the past month I've been working with a couple from London, Ont., who are transferring into Georgetown. What a month it has been and a nightmare in many respects. Housing prices are so drastically different in the London area, that it seems they are going to have to pay almost double for an identical home that they are moving from. How in the world can this be possible, for a little town like Georgetown, to have such highly priced homes. London is just 2 hours away, and a university town, lots of growth and great housing.

Well, here is where the problem lies. With no growth of any significant mention in town, we are forcing people, who want to live in Georgetown, to pay more for their homes than in neighboring towns. At one time, we had lower costs than Brampton, but, by looking through our MLS books now, you will note, that this is no longer true. Although it is wonderful for the vendors out there, I wonder if the honeymoon will soon be over, and frankly, I think it is about time.

Our prices have increased so dramatically over the past 5 years, due to a shortage of homes, that it is possible that we have an artificial view of our worth. With the new subdivision now under way, we just might see a levelling of prices for a few years. It is hard to say just how these new homes are going to affect our prices, but I can't help but think the levelling affect has got to be good for our first time buyers, and for the mid-range buyers too.

What a shame it is for any agent to have to tell a first time buyer that they can't afford Georgetown, and that they are going to have to look further west where prices are quite a bit lower. Surely there is something wrong with the system. Georgetown doesn't boast of great amenities, all we can boast about, is that we are very unique in having the Bruce Trail, the Niagara Escarpment and the Credit Valley at our doorstep. Should this be the reason for our high prices? I don't think so. Personally I am welcoming the growth, small that it is, to help out our purchasers. It is long overdue, and maybe now, we might even get the odd major chain looking at us with newly opened eyes, and our current entrepreneurs making a decent living with the new folks in town. Three cheers for the mess on the 9th Line! We do deserve a boost for the kids who want to buy in Georgetown.

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