



# Heart Matters



## Taking care of your heart by eating right

Is your idea of the perfect breakfast fried eggs, bacon, white bread spread with lots of creamy butter and a big glass of whole milk? While none of these foods is necessarily bad for most people if eaten in moderation, they all contain a substance — cholesterol — that when consumed in large quantities over a long period of time, can cause problems for your heart.

Cholesterol has been in the media quite a bit lately. And, in general, it has a pretty bad reputation. What exactly is cholesterol? Cholesterol is a soft, fat-like substance found among the fats in the blood-stream called lipids. A high level of lipids in the blood-stream is called hyperlipidemia, which is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease.

With hyperlipidemia, cholesterol and other lipids have a tendency to build up in the inner lining of the blood ves-

sels and block the passage of blood. In order to function properly, the heart needs oxygen. Because the blood vessels have become narrow (a condition known as atherosclerosis), the heart's oxygen supply is cut off. The result of this deprivation is severe chest pains or a heart attack.

High blood cholesterol is caused both by eating cholesterol-rich foods and heredity. Since no one can pick their parents, the only current defense against high blood cholesterol is eating right and exercise.

Cholesterol-rich foods include whole milk dairy products, organ meats, shrimp, lobster and egg yolks. In general, saturated fats have a tendency to raise cholesterol. Animal fats, coconut and palm oils are major sources of saturated fats. Completely hydrogenated unsaturated fats can also produce cholesterol.

However, most margarines and shortenings feature partially hydrogenated oils.

If you are concerned about

cholesterol, talk to your doctor. He or she can easily measure your cholesterol level and recommend an appropriate

diet. Other ways to keep your heart healthy include not smoking cigarettes, maintaining your proper weight and

## Quick facts about matters of the heart

◊ Canada's #1 killer is heart disease and stroke, claiming 80,000 lives EACH YEAR — more lives than all other diseases combined — twice as many as cancer.

◊ More than 4 in 10 deaths in Canada are due to heart disease and stroke.

◊ More men than women die from diseases of the heart; more women than men die from stroke.

◊ Mortality from coronary artery disease for Canadians aged 65 and over has declined approximately 36 per cent since 1971; mortality from stroke for the same group has decreased 43 per cent.

◊ Circulatory (cardiovascular) disease accounts for 20.6 per cent of all long-term disabilities.

◊ During the period 1980-84,

57,664 of deaths due to coronary artery disease can be described as attributable to smoking. In comparison, 55,619 of deaths due to cancer in the same period were attributable to smoking.

◊ Over 2.6 million Canadians would reduce their risk of heart disease by lowering their blood pressure.

◊ You have a fifty-fifty chance of dying of heart disease or stroke.

◊ The average Canadian family spends only 60 cents a month fighting Canada's #1 killer. The average Canadian family spends just under \$10 a month on between-meal snacks in restaurants. For the price of a muffin or coffee, Canadians can double their investment to improve their odds against heart and stroke.

◊ More than 65,000 people donate

their time and talents to help battle Canada's #1 killer — heart disease and stroke.

◊ A report released by Statistics Canada last year states that improvements in diagnosis and treatment, as well as individual lifestyle changes, have resulted in 35,000 lives being saved per year.

◊ The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, which funds two-thirds of all heart and stroke research in Ontario, is a registered, not-for-profit organization. Its mandate is to provide funds for research and education to reduce death and disability from heart disease and stroke. The provincial Foundation's fund raising and education programs are delivered by volunteers in 86 chapters across the province.

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