

Cholesterol: We are dumb

By *Robb Wolf* | October 29, 2009

You may all lose faith in me and my abilities to write the book after I tell you this story. I spent over a month outlining the project. After about 5 failed attempts to get the book going. I'm not used to organizing this much material and it's tough to keep everything straight. So, I finally sat down and just focussed on outlining the project. I felt like I had a pretty solid outline, ran it by several folks, everyone felt it as solid so I dug in! I did the intro chapter, covered insulin, was workign my way through fats and realized I forgot a ton of important material in my outline. Important things like...oh...say...cardiovascular disease. You know, heart attacks and stroke...the most common killers of North Americans. Yea, I'm an idiot. I have worked on this paleo diet stuff for so long that the heart disease issue is completely passe. It is such a forgone conclusion that a low carb paleo diet will protect you from CVD that I forgot to include it in the damn book. Well, almost. So I sat down and outlined what I wanted to say about CVD and started collecting references and I ran across some goodies. They illustrate that I am not the only idiot apparently!

The basics of the diet-heart hypothesis go like this: High cholesterol leads to atherosclerotic plaques that precipitate a clot which can result in a heart attack or stroke. This whole notion grew from a disease called Familial Hypercholesterolemia and subsequent experiments that involved feeding rabbits (herbivores) oxidized cholesterol. These critters do not eat ANY cholesterol so the fact oxidized cholesterol caused problems is not surprising but also completely unhelpful when talking about people. Anyway, 50 years to failed dietary recommendations to lower cholesterol have done nothing to alleviate the CVD epidemic. In fact, the epidemic is rolling along bigger and badder than ever before. Well [This Study](#) was pretty interesting. It indicates that most people who suffer a heart attack have...low cholesterol! Now, everyone is in a fix to get folks on cholesterol lowering diets and statins to save them, but most heart attacks are in folks with...low cholesterol! Ok, doesn't make any sense and it completely calls into question the notion that we need to reduce cholesterol levels...but why not give people statins and see how folks do on those. Well, interestingly, statins appear to decrease heart attack rates in people...[with low cholesterol](#). The mechanism? Possibly a reduction in C-reactive protein (CRP), an indicator of systemic inflammation. Know what else reduces systemic inflammation? A paleo diet which controls insulin levels, removes gut irritating foods, balances omega-3/omega-6 fats. Add some vit-d and consistent good sleep and you have effectively turned off the type of inflammation underlying CVD, cancer and neurodegeneration.

Oh! Then there is the fact [low cholesterol increases stroke rates!!](#)

So, just to clarify:

1-Cholesterol supposedly causes CVD, But

2-Most heart attacks are actually occurring in people with low cholesterol, Yet

3-Doctors insist on cholesterol lowering protocols, including statins, Even though,

4-The benefit of statins has nothing to do with cholesterol, but rather it's mild anti-inflammatory action, Which

5-Can be accomplished with simple dietary modifications and a few inexpensive supplements.

It would be funny if people were not dying from this stuff.

