

Healing For Life
Tape Date –
Air Date –
Cholesterol study
204 Word Count

This is Dr. Linda Leckman with Medicine Today.

We all know that too much cholesterol is a problem, and the lower our cholesterol levels, the better off we are. Imagine the surprise of Heidi May and her fellow researchers when they found that very low levels of cholesterol may predict a greater chance of a person experiencing heart failure than higher cholesterol levels. Their findings were published in The American Journal of Cardiology on July 10, 2006.

Heidi, an epidemiologist in cardiovascular research at LDS Hospital, says very low levels of cholesterol, which the study defined as being less than 141, could be the result of a person having an inflammation. In fact, approximately 70 percent of heart failure patients have an inflammatory condition called C-reactive protein. Previous studies have established that acute inflammation drives down cholesterol levels.

Heidi's study found that those with cholesterol levels between 141 and 201 had between 23 percent and 34 percent lower risk of death when compared with patients in the lowest cholesterol range. This is a significant difference.

These findings indicate that heart failure patients with very low cholesterol levels, namely below 141, should be carefully monitored by their physician, and when inflammation is present, patients should be aware that the risk is even greater.

I'm Dr. Linda Leckman with Intermountain Healthcare, and this has been Healing for Life on KSL news radio.

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Alzheimer study
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This is Dr. Linda Leckman with Medicine Today.

Alzheimer's disease seems destined to become increasingly widespread as our population ages. The number of Americans with the disease will reach 15 million in 2050, three times the current total. Utah, with one of the fastest growing populations of those 65 and older, will have an estimated 50,000 residents with the disease by the year 2025.

Though devastating, Alzheimer's has no cure. Kelly Davis Garrett, a clinical neuropsychologist at LDS Hospital, says that studies with mice which are genetically programmed to get Alzheimer's indicate that regular exercise slows the progression of the disease in these mice.

Now, she and her colleagues at LDS Hospital want to learn if regular exercise can have a similar effect on people and help maintain their ability to remember and think. The researchers are currently setting up a study, which is open to those aged 65 to 89 with mild memory impairment and who can exercise three times a week for up to six months. Memory, attitudes and thinking ability will be tested. Exercise programs will be tailored for each individual participant by exercise physiologists.

For more information or to enroll, call the Geriatric Cognitive Clinic at LDS Hospital, whose phone number is: 801 408-5498.

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Open-heart surgery demonstration
198 Word Count

This is Dr. Linda Leckman with Medicine Today.

Dr. Roger Millar, a cardiothoracic surgeon at Intermountain's Dixie Regional Medical Center in St. George, recently conducted a series of open-heart surgery presentations at The First Russian Symposium of Cardiosurgeons. This was held at the Russian Medical-Military Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia.

He was there to teach Russian doctors a how to perform a stentless aortic valve replacement using a running suture technique called Medtronic-Freestyle. One demonstration involved Dr. Millar performing an operation while wearing a head-mounted camera that allowed surgeons in another room to watch. He also supervised Russian doctors while they were operating using the technique.

A Russian translator assisted him at the conference, but he found that during the surgeries, simple hand signals, such as those signifying "clamp" and "cut," were sufficiently clear that the translator's services were often not needed.

Dr. Millar, who founded Dixie Regional's heart surgery program, has taught this technique across the United States, as well as in Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands and other countries.

He says the Russian facilities were older than ours, but that their surgical equipment was modern and up-to-date. It was a considerable honor for him to be invited to Russia to demonstrate and teach his techniques.

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LiVe public service campaign
200 Word Count

This is Dr. Linda Leckman with Medicine Today.

One in four Utah children are overweight and nearly 10 percent are considered obese. Childhood obesity is both a national and local health problem. To combat it, Intermountain Healthcare has launched a multi-year statewide campaign to encourage more physical activity and better eating habits among Utah's children.

The campaign, called LiVe, has the distinctive logo where both the "L" and "V" in the word live are capitalized. It is focused primarily at children ages 11 to 15.

Dr. Tamara Lewis, Intermountain's director of community health, says childhood obesity may be the most critical health issue facing the current generation of children. If we do not slow down its increase, she warns, it will cause even more serious health problems in the future.

LiVe will encourage children to spend less time with game systems and computers and to become more active. It will also teach them to think about what they eat.

The campaign includes advertising, events for both children and their parents, school assemblies, education materials for health providers and parents, and an interactive website.

By coordinating with children, parents, schools and the medical community, says Dr. Lewis, we can reverse the crisis we now are having with overweight children.

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Heart disease and air pollution study
200 Word Count

This is Dr. Linda Leckman with Medicine Today.

The common wisdom is that exercise is always good. This winter, that may have been poor advice, given the inversions we have had. Inversions are ugly but, more importantly, new research finds that they are also unhealthy. Going outside to exercise during an inversion can be detrimental to your health.

A groundbreaking article published in the journal *Circulation*, based on research at Brigham Young University and LDS Hospital, found that people suffer more heart attacks and other coronary events when Utah's wintertime inversions boost air pollution for even just a day or two. This was a 12-year study that included 12,000 heart patients who had blockage in at least one artery.

When there are public warnings about high air pollution, doctors and their lung patients often discuss the situation, but not doctors and their heart patients, notes Dr. Jeffrey L. Anderson, associate chief of cardiology at LDS Hospital, who was involved in the study. This study, he says, should change how doctors take care of heart patients as these patients need to be made aware of the potential effects of air pollution on their health.

His advice: when the air is filled with pollution, we are better off staying indoors.

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Portable scanner
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This is Dr. Linda Leckman with Medicine Today.

An innovative portable scanning device is helping Utah cancer and other patients. Called a GE Lightspeed, it combines CT and PET scanners into one. These scanners, which provide precise readings of potential cancer growths, have been around for years, but combining them is new.

The machine is used by Intermountain Healthcare hospitals in Ogden, American Fork and St. George. Patients are able to have a CT scan, which takes 25 seconds, and a PET scan, which takes 25 minutes, without having to move. In addition to enhancing patient convenience, the new device can improve image quality because when a patient moves, irregularities in the scan image can occur.

The machine has a variety of uses, but far and away, the number one use is for cancer, says Daniel Rasband, a diagnostic radiologist at American Fork Hospital. It can service six to eight patients a day.

The machine is portable, but hardly what one would call handy. This \$3 million behemoth requires its own custom-built trailer and weighs in at a hefty 55,000 pounds. Because it is portable, it provides very valuable, precise diagnostic information to those with cancer who are located in communities that do not have full-time scanners.

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Patient safety
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This is Dr. Linda Leckman with Medicine Today.

Recently, Jean Bigelow's 85 year old dad dropped off a prescription, only to pick it up later and find it had the wrong person's name on it. Mistakes happen, even though healthcare providers work hard to not make any. Jean knows this as well as anyone. She oversees patient safety programs at LDS Hospital.

March 4 through 10th is National Patient Safety Awareness Week, which focuses on educating patients to become more involved with their own healthcare. Jean says those who ask their healthcare providers questions, who become active members of their healthcare team, can benefit with better healthcare outcomes.

Do not be intimidated because someone is a healthcare professional. Information is powerful and helps give you control over your situation, says Jean. If you do not understand a caregiver's answer, ask for an explanation.

Keep a list with you of prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications and herbal remedies you take. If you happen to be in an accident, those treating you will need to know this information. At home, dispose of all expired medications.

Patient safety is the responsibility of both patients and caregivers. National Patient Safety Awareness Week is a good time to start taking better control of your healthcare.

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