

Don't De-liver ate

Can your liver deliver? When was the last time you saw an ad that emphasized your liver? We don't even serve liver and onions any more. Your poor, ignored liver. It sits there as the ultimate filter for the bad things we eat, it makes cholesterol, it stores some vitamins, produces substances that break down fats, and converts blood glucose into glycogen so that it can store carbohydrates that we eat, and it converts sugar into triglycerides. It's that sugar to triglyceride conversion that we're going to concentrate on. Because it is what is causing us to be FAT.

"Right," you say sarcastically. "I never heard that. I'm on a low-fat diet, I use fat-blockers, I buy low-fat eggs, ice cream, yogurt, cakes, cookies, pies, etc., etc." Boy, have we been sold a bill of goods. Now do you really think that something that is called "low fat" really creates low fat? We're buying a lot of "low fat" products. And I hear that the scale near the doorway of Publix is calling for reinforcements.

So here's what happens when you eat "low-fat." Unless you're eating cardboard, (even rice cakes are high in sugar) you're eating high sugar. I know. They don't tell you that. They also don't tell you that a review of 21 studies found no clear link between the consumption of saturated fat (found in meat and dairy products) and a higher risk of developing heart disease or stroke. (Am J Clin Nutr 10;91:535-546) They don't tell us a lot of things.

High levels of refined carbohydrates causes our blood sugar to be elevated. And when that occurs, the liver works to convert that sugar into something that it can store. It can't store carbohydrates to much of a degree. So if we eat a lot of carbs, insulin is produced by the pancreas and attaches itself to the sugar and moves it to the liver. The liver converts that sugar into triglycerides, a component of fat. As you know, we have an unlimited capacity to store fat.

The liver does more with triglycerides. It turns them into something called VLDL's, very low density lipoproteins. You've heard of LDL's, the bad cholesterol? VLDL's are worse. They produce the most dangerous lipoproteins which then result in inflammation and plaques in your arteries. They deplete the body of HDL's, the good cholesterol. By the way, HDL 2B is the most beneficial cholesterol.

A complete blood test panel of factors is available from your doctor. It comprises much more than the old total cholesterol, and HDL/LDL ratio.

What's neat is that you can lower your triglycerides, and thus your risk of heart disease and stroke. How? Stop looking for low-fat. Stop looking for that panacea. Start reducing your refined carbs. Go for the whole foods. Your liver will be happy, and so will your heart.

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