



Headshot by Shannon Adelson of Adelson Media, Inc.

By Dr. Cynthia Crosser

As most people move into middle age, matters of the heart tend to become a focus of their healthcare. And despite the attention to low-fat diets that have been around since the 60s and the vast use of cholesterol lowering drugs, cardiovascular disease remains the top cause of death across all age groups and around the globe. As baby boomers age, the experts predict the situation will worsen, unless current trends are halted or reversed.

Among more progressive, functional medicine practitioners, it's not all doom and gloom and we are looking beyond overall cholesterol numbers to prevent or reverse heart disease. Cardiovascular disease is multifactorial to involve your food choices, the toxins you're exposed to, exercise, your level of inflammation, and how you respond to stress and tension.

Functional medicine practitioners go beyond merely addressing the signs and symptom management of lowering cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar via pharmaceuticals, they look to find the underlying causes of those symptoms. Understanding the root causes, helps you to identify the major drivers of the risk of cardiovascular disease, inflammatory conditions, free radicals, high blood sugar, blood clotting problems and stress overload. Reducing the cause of heart disease by eating less red meat is far too simplistic.

One such example exists in many cases, where dietary sources have little impact on elevated cholesterol. The body is producing more to handle its own demand. Chronic inflammation may begin to lower testosterone production. The body will produce more cholesterol to revive the hormone, as cholesterol is a precursor to this and many other hormones. We see a similar relationship in hypothyroidism.

An autonomic nervous system response may also create and increase cholesterol production, due to the fact that as more cortisol is needed

Functional Medicine & Matters Of The Heart

in stress, it requires more cholesterol. As for genetics, the actual number of people who are genetically predisposed is fairly rare. In most cases, elevated cholesterol is the body's defense response to something occurring somewhere else in the body. Another such example is one who struggles to get LDLs down which could actually indicate an underlying infection.

The flip-side of this is that normal cholesterol levels do not mean no risk or low risk. In fact, 25% of people who have heart attacks have low cholesterol, while 25% of people with high cholesterol do not have plaque or heart disease.

As a functional medicine practitioner, my approach is to take an extensive history to identify factors that may have set the stage for illness, factors that set off the illness, and those that are facilitating the condition. This information is put into a timeline and matrix to address the system in most need of attention. Many times functional testing and inflammatory markers are utilized. An example of such is advanced testing to identify the actual number and characteristics of lipoprotein particles vs. just the LDL volume we traditionally measure. Lifestyle factors are also taken into consideration and a treatment plan to include these aspects are individualized for that person.

As with so many conditions, inflammation is a driver of heart disease . . . But looking at the whole person can bring massive change and prevention of future problems . . . in matters of the heart.

For more information, call 302-239-5014 or visit our website at www.crossernaturalhealth.com

TESTIMONIALS

"As a double cancer survivor myself, Dr. Crosser and I immediately connected. What an inspiration she is! I've never experienced a doctor in my 60+ years that is as compassionate, devoted, and GENUINELY concerned for their patients as Dr. Crosser! I've been seeing her since August of 2015 and through her patient specific, tailored program of nutrition, appropriate supplements, and workshops, I've managed to lose the extra pounds, get back to the gym, and have a litany of nagging and annoying physical ailments that other doctor's mostly attributed to "old age", or "in my head" disappear! I haven't felt this good in 35 years!

She's absolutely changed my life! Thank you so much Dr. Crosser! " - Steve H.

"Since working with Dr. Crosser my health and well-being has changed dramatically! As a woman in my mid 50's I try to stay somewhat healthy or at least I thought so! Experiencing stubborn weight loss, bloating and poor gut health I was in a slow spiral to poor nutrition and health. Through Dr. Crosser's guidance, high quality nutritional supplements and her unwavering dedication to her patients I have never felt better! Thank you Dr. Crosser!! Everyone should have just one hour with you to see how they can make improvements for a healthy lifestyle!" - June E.

"By a stroke of luck, I met Dr. Crosser and began working with her. Despite a relatively healthy diet and exercise, I was suffering from anxiety, fatigue, and generally not feeling well. Dr. Crosser conducted a very thorough analysis of my symptoms and health history before recommending a customized regiment of high quality, natural supplements. The results have been miraculous. I had forgotten what it felt like to be well. I have my life back! Thank you, thank you, thank you, Dr. Crosser." - Judy T.

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