



Does Saturated Fat Actually Make You Fat?

By:

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Does it Raise Your Cholesterol? Is Cholesterol Important? Does it Raise Your Triglycerides? Is That Really Important? What Fraction of Cholesterol Is Important?

Since the 1950s and 1960s, we have been told to avoid saturated fats. We have gone through decades of being told that cholesterol is bad for us and saturated fat causes high total cholesterol and high cholesterol causes heart disease. Your doctor will likely still caution you on your cholesterol numbers and never differentiate between the low density, high density or pattern a and pattern b, (and now I think they have found a pattern c subfraction.)

Likely your doctor will either not read your records before your appointment or just gives them a cursory overview. Furthermore, he or she will likely not mention VLDL—very low-density lipoprotein. This is actually the very most important of all subfractions of cholesterol; and yet, your doctor may never broach this very dangerous subgroup of your blood panel. Why? He or she either thinks you are too ignorant or dumb to grasp it, or just does not have the time to see all the “overbooked” patients he has in his waiting room. Or, just maybe, the doctor feels that, in your obese state, you don’t care; so why should he? Granted, obesity is likely due to ignorance on our part (would we intentionally become obese?), but shouldn’t that give our doctors incentive to educate us? Or, could it be that he or she does not know?

If he or she is like my VA doctor, you will likely be told you have high total cholesterol but not told that total cholesterol is *totally* meaningless—unless, of course, you have a rare type genetic disorder like familial hypercholesterolemia. These people have defective LDL-cholesterol receptors and are about the only folks to benefit from using statin drugs which lowers only LDL, which is only a minor bio marker for heart disease. However, that is a topic for a later discussion.

LDL is most often measured indirectly by subtracting HDL and triglycerides from total cholesterol. This measurement is next to meaningless. You also will likely not be told that if there is any meaningful use in measuring and recording LDL, the fact that it usually is not a direct measurement negates any meaning it might have had. So, is saturated fat bad for your health? Is dietary cholesterol bad for your health? “No” is the short answer. Just try living without either of them.



Figure 1: My fasting blood sugar before breakfast

My normal breakfast is bacon and eggs. One of the qualities of eggs is there are so many ways to prepare them. You can boil them, hard, easy, or medium. You can scramble them with onions, garlic, and bacon bits. You can cook them in omelet form, plain cheese, plain eggs, western, or combination. Or, you can poach them; or, you can cook eggs benedict.

Then, of course, there is my favorite: the good old fried egg. Again, it can be fried hard, soft, or over easy or



Figure 2: My breakfast of four eggs, four bacon strips, ½ of a small re-cooked potato—for resistant starch.



over medium. However you choose to fry them, don't use vegetable oils. Which is a topic for a future discussion.

Now, I can just see you grimacing and hear you grunting. I think you even squirmed in your seat about all that cholesterol. "Don't you know what you are doing to your blood vessels? You'll have a heart attack at a young age," you are thinking.



Figure 3: My blood sugar reading 2 hours post meal.

Really? Too late! I'll be seventy-five in three months. On my birthdays, I most always do push-ups the same number as I am years old. Last year at 74, I did over 74 just in case I couldn't do 75 this year. Since my son will be in Germany on my 75th, I plan to have him video my 75 pushups this year before my birthday, unless—of course—you would like to tag along with me to the gym and video them on my actual birthday—December 31, 1947—just in case you were planning on throwing me a birthday party: hint...hint...hint.



Figure 4: Fasting blood sugar

This morning I got up with a blood sugar reading of 104. Not bad for a diabetic. If you are still concerned about "all that fat," just look at it this way: as a diabetic, I have to be cautious about my blood sugar spikes. Those blood sugar spikes raise my insulin levels and high insulin will promote insulin resistance. This in turn will render the body unable to access stored fat for its energy use. The constantly high insulin circulating in the blood will promote all excess carbohydrates to turn into triglycerides—storing even more fat in the adipose tissue. It will promote the growth of the smooth muscles of the blood vessel lining, causing narrowing of the arteries.

Natural dietary fat will not spike blood sugar and it will not raise insulin levels. So, what will it do? It will encourage the liver to produce ketones and encourage the body to burn the excess fat stored around the waist. This in turn will improve both diabetic and heart disease biomarkers. Saturated fat is the only nutrient that will raise HDL which is a much better indicator of heart disease than LDL. Dietary (natural) fats from animals will not promote body fat. Nor will it promote the many degenerative diseases experienced in the current epidemics around the world today.