



# Health Concepts Newsletter

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## Inflammation—the True Killer

I have been sharing for years with my readers that inflammation is the underlying cause of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's dementia, macular degeneration, arthritis, and the list goes on and on. Well, the media is now picking up on these truths and you are going to be hearing a lot about inflammation over the next decade. In fact, it is the hot topic of our time. In the February 23, 2004 issue of Time Magazine, the front cover and main article is on the subject of Inflammation—The Secret Killer. The authors of this article state that heart disease is NOT a disease of cholesterol, but instead, is an inflammatory disease. Over half of the patients who have heart attacks actually have normal cholesterol levels. They go on to state that the underlying cause of diabetes, Alzheimer's dementia, diabetes, and a host of other diseases is inflammation. Dr. Meigs recently reported in the April 28<sup>th</sup> issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) that women who had the highest amount of inflammation in their arteries had 5 times the risk of developing diabetes than those with the least amount of inflammation. I shared this study with you in last month's newsletter. Suffice it to say that you are now just beginning to hear about the dangers of too much inflammation in your body. However, you are going to be hearing more and more about this throughout the media and medical community and there is one main reason. The pharmaceutical industry is on verge of releasing several drugs and promoting drugs that have already been released that are aimed at reversing this damaging inflammation. However, very few will ever you tell you how you can prevent this inflammation from starting in the first place.

This month's issue will just give you an overview of the best way you can protect yourself from developing inflammation in the first place.

### What is the Cause of all of this Inflammation?

In my book, *What Your Doctor Doesn't Know About Nutritional Medicine May Be Killing You* (Thomas Nelson 2002), I explain the underlying or root cause of over 70 chronic degenerative diseases is oxidative stress. This is the dark side of oxygen. We are actually rusting inside. Oxidative stress is actually the cause of this inflammatory response and the media and medical community are not relating these two phenomenons within the body. Free radicals must be immediately rendered harmless via antioxidants or they can go on to damage the vessel wall, cell wall, proteins, fats, and even the DNA nucleus of the cell. When the vessel wall, cell wall, or DNA is damaged the immune system is activated in an attempt to repair this damage. However, since the causes of oxidative stress are usually chronic, the immune system has difficulty shutting down and a low-grade, chronic inflammatory response usually develops. Medicine and medical research is going to focus on trying to reverse this inflammation once it has already done some significant damage. However, nutritional medicine aims at eliminating or preventing the oxidative stress that is causing the damage in the beginning. Not only is your body protected from this damage but it also prevents the inflammation from occurring in the first place.



## Heart Disease—an Inflammatory Disease

I would encourage everyone who has a copy of my book, *What Your Doctor Doesn't Know About Nutritional Medicine May Be Killing You* (Thomas Nelson 2002) to at least read chapter 5. You will realize that the medical evidence that heart disease is an inflammatory disease has been present for the past 12 to 14 years in our medical literature. I also wrote about these findings in my book, *Bionutrition* (Health Concepts 1998) over 6 years ago. The cause of heart attacks is not the build up of too much cholesterol found in your blood stream but instead is the result of a low-grade, chronic inflammatory process of the thin, one-cell lining of your arteries. What are the causes of this inflammation?

- Oxidized or Modified LDL cholesterol
- Elevated Homocysteine Levels
- Excessive free radicals produced from high blood pressure, diabetes, cigarette smoke, excessive stress, excessive exercise, pollutants in the air, food, and water, medication, and radiation.
- Elevated blood sugars especially following a high-glycemic meal
- Elevated fat especially following a high-fatty meal
- Elevated insulin levels (Metabolic Syndrome/Syndrome X)

All of these situations actually produce excessive free radicals that actually damage this very fine lining of our arteries called the endothelium. The body's natural immune system will try to heal this damage by creating an immune response or inflammatory response. If this damage can be healed the inflammatory response settles down and everything is fine. However, what happens in the majority of cases, the insulting factors that created the damage in first place continue to create more and more damage. The result is a chronic, low-grade inflammatory process that literally goes on to do more harm than good. In fact, it is the inflammation that actually does most

of the damage to our arteries than the original insult. When physicians and researchers actually do blood tests to check for this inflammation [the most common test is the high sensitive C-reactive protein] they are better able to predict who is going to have a heart attack or not.

## Alzheimer's dementia, diabetes, cancer etc.

There now is increasing evidence that oxidative stress actually leads to this inflammation, which is the underlying cause of Alzheimer's dementia, diabetes mellitus, cancer, arthritis, and a host of other degenerative disease. Obviously, I am not able to fully cover this subject in one newsletter. However, I want you to be aware of the fact that the medical community and pharmaceutical industry are going to become very excited about this new information because it offers them several different strategies to try to decrease the prevalence of these diseases. As I mentioned earlier, their approach will focus on developing newer and more powerful drugs to reverse this inflammation after it has already occurred. This is the way medicine approaches almost all of these problems. They will bombard you with information, education, and commercials telling you why you need to be taking their drugs. What they will not inform you is how you can modify your lifestyles so that you can eliminate the inflammation from occurring in the first place. This would be "True" preventive medicine.

## Healthy Lifestyles that Decrease or Prevent Inflammation

I believe in a triad of healthy lifestyles that are designed to decrease or eliminate all of these causes of inflammation and is your best protection against developing any of these chronic degenerative diseases. These healthy lifestyles are detailed on my web page and you merely need to click on to the option that shows you these [Healthy Lifestyles](#). You need to develop a healthy diet that combines good fats, good

proteins, and good carbohydrates that does not spike your blood sugar. You need to develop a consistent, modest exercise program that includes at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise 5 times per week. You also need to begin taking advanced levels of nutritional supplements that provides cellular nutrition. When you combine all three of these healthy lifestyles, you either eliminate or significantly decrease all the causes of inflammation. There is no need to have to take medication because you are preventing the inflammation from even occurring. This is "True" preventive medicine. I will be focusing much of my research and writings on this subject in the future. Once you begin to understand that it is these excessive free radicals that not only leads to oxidative stress and damage to your body but it is also what causes this inflammation in the first place, you begin to understand why nutritional supplementation along with these healthy lifestyles are so important.

## Testimonial

Anna has been a patient of mine for some time. She was a very successful athlete all the way through high school and college and her weight was never an issue. In fact, when she got married she wore a size six. During her three pregnancies she put on more weight than she wanted and found it very difficult getting it off. Though frustrating, this only accounted for a 10 to 12 pound weight gain.

She then went through some very stressful times in her life, which led to episodes of panic attacks. After a complete and thorough work up, no other physical problems could be found and her physician at that time placed her on the drug, Paxil, which provided significant improvement. In fact, she felt like she could live normally while she was on the medication. Anna continued taking the drug and did quite well. Quite well, that is, except for her weight. She gained an additional 60 pounds over the next two years while taking Paxil.

It is becoming very common for patients, like Anna, who are placed on what are referred to as SSRI anti-depressants to gain weight and in some cases, a *considerable amount of weight*. SSRI anti-depressants are believed to exacerbate what I refer to as the carbohydrate addiction. This is why I encourage my clients to switch from these types of medications if at all possible. If not, I prefer using drugs such as Wellbutrin (this is in a different kind of drug class), Effexor or the long-acting, once-a-week, Prozac. These all have less of a tendency to contribute to weight gain.

Anna consulted me and it was obvious that she had significant cravings for carbohydrates, which was the source of her emotional eating. As she developed a healthy diet that did not spike her blood sugar, her cravings and emotional eating faded away within the first 10 days! Her appetite came under control and she actually felt better than she had in several years. I am always

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excited to hear that my patients are learning and fully adopting new, healthy lifestyles, which result in a side effect of fat loss.

Anna's weight started coming off in spite of the fact that she continued with her Paxil. Within 12 weeks, her weight dropped from 215 pounds down to 189 pounds. Her BMI (Body Mass Index) dropped from 35 to 31 and her waist size decreased from 42 inches to 35 inches. Even though her cholesterol and triglycerides were not terrible when she started the program they improved significantly as well. She was also able to significantly reduce the cause of much of the inflammation in her body.

Remember that these changes occurred in just 12 weeks! Obviously, Anna needs to continue her new lifestyle that she has learned. It has been my experience that people need to focus and concentrate on these new, healthy lifestyles for 15 to 18 months before they just become a way of life. Otherwise, they simply return to that old carbohydrate addiction and unhealthy eating habits. If Anna continues what she has learned, she will just keep getting better and better.

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