

HEALTH MATTERS

ST PETERS FAMILY PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

JULY - OCTOBER 2010

ST. PETERS FAMILY PRACTICE
ACCREDITED GENERAL MEDICAL PRACTICE
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PRACTICE PRINCIPAL: DR. ADAM PEDLER
ASSOCIATE DOCTOR: DR. MARGARET TAYLOR
PRACTICE MANAGER: LYN PEDLER
RECEPTION STAFF: DEBBIE CURTIS
EVE CARSON
PRACTICE NURSE: ISLA YIANNOULLOU

PRACTICE HOURS:

MONDAY – FRIDAY 8.30 AM – 6.00 PM

AFTERHOURS:

DR. PEDLER PROVIDES PERSONAL AFTERHOURS COVER MONDAY TO FRIDAY, EXCEPT BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 10.00 PM AND 7.00 AM WHEN CALLS WILL BE DIRECTED TO OUR LOCUM SERVICE. WHEN DR PEDLER IS NOT AVAILABLE, AFTER THESE HOURS OR ON WEEK-ENDS, OUR PAGING SERVICE WILL OFFER YOU A HOME VISIT FROM OUR LOCUM SERVICE OR DIRECT YOU TO AVAILABLE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS.

IN THIS ISSUE

- *The latest Practice news.*
- *Dr Pedler urges you not to be complacent about Diabetes, our new “lifestyle disease”.*
- *Dr Taylor discusses reducing cholesterol & heart attack risk with Fish Oil, Chromium and Vitamin C.*

FROM THE RECEPTION DESK

Congratulations to our practice nurse Isla and her husband Peter on the arrival of their first baby, Skye. Skye arrived a little earlier than anticipated on July 5th shortly after we farewelled Isla on maternity leave. Mother and baby are doing well and Isla would like to thank all our patients for their gifts, thoughts and best wishes.

During Isla’s absence over the next several months, we have made a few temporary changes, mainly relating to offering blood tests for Annual Health Checks and Home Visits for our over 75 year old patients.

Annual Health Check-ups

As a part of our Preventive Health Program we encourage our patients to have an **annual health check-up** during which we take a blood test to analyse important elements of your health. If you take the first available early morning appointment with Dr. Pedler he will take a blood test during the consultation. As these are popular appointments there may be a wait for the next available time. If you wish to be seen sooner, it is not a problem, but we will need to do things a little differently. Whilst Isla is on maternity leave we are unable to take the blood test here, so you will need to have the fasting, early morning bloods taken elsewhere prior to the appointment with Dr. Pedler. Our receptionists, Debbie & Eve, will organise all the paperwork you need to make it as easy as possible for you.

Home Visits to our over 75 year old Patients

Isla has been conducting our program of *Annual Health Assessments for Over 75Year Old Patients* in their own homes. The program assists Dr. Pedler to have a better understanding of your personal health needs and aims at preventing illness and accidents because we want to keep you as healthy as possible and at home for as long as possible. It is an important program that we do not want to lapse during Isla's absence so we have asked registered nurse, Kellie Ellis, to continue the visits. Some of you may remember Kellie who helped us conduct the program before we had our own practice nurse. Once Kellie has seen you, please ensure you keep your follow-up appointments with Dr. Pedler at the surgery.

A Reminder about Repeat Prescriptions

Many surgeries insist you make an appointment for a repeat prescription. We understand that your time is important and that this is not always necessary, so we have a system whereby you can ring and make a telephone request. Please remember we need at least **24 hours notice** for all scripts and we prefer you collect them personally. There is an additional charge for more urgent scripts or those that need to be posted and/or faxed.

Recognise a Familiar Face?

During August/September/October you may notice a familiar face on the Reception desk! Marie is returning, temporarily, to assist us during Debbie's extended holiday leave! Thank you Marie we're looking forward to sharing old times!

FROM THE DESK OF DR. ADAM PEDLER

I have recently attended the Annual Woman's And Children's Hospital Update and The Australian Medical Acupuncture College AGM. Both were informative with interesting speakers and updates. In this newsletter however I want to devote my time to **DIABETES**.

We hear a lot about Diabetes in the media today and many of us know family or friends who have developed the condition. Despite this I think a lot of patients underestimate, or are complacent about the risks and complications of developing today's lifestyle disease. It is a serious disease that can be prevented.

Our practice has been working hard to identify and recall patients at risk of Diabetes, and to assist our diagnosed diabetics with a "cycle of care" where we monitor, educate and review their condition. We are very pleased that our statistics indicate a good improvement has been made by our patients. A simple blood test will reveal your HbA1c (or glycated hemoglobin level) which is a measurement of your average blood sugar over the previous 3 months and this should be less than 7.0%. I have asked Isla, our practice nurse to write an article on "How to lower your HbA1c" and it follows mine.

I would also like to refer you to an excellent article written by Dr. Chris Bollen on Diabetes. It was recently published in the "Over 50's" magazine by Walsh Media, Adelaide. It will give you a very good understanding of the risks and complications of diabetes. Due to limitations on space in this newsletter a printed copy of the article will be available separately at reception and on our website and I encourage you to read it.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRACTICE NURSE

HOW TO LOWER YOUR HbA1c

As Dr. Pedler has said above, HbA1c, or glycated hemoglobin level, is a blood test that gives us an indication of your risk for diabetes. It is a measurement of your average blood sugar over the previous 3 months and should be less than 7.0%. Levels more than 7.0% are linked to complications from diabetes such as heart attack, stroke, blocked arteries in the legs and eyes and nerve damage in the legs and other parts of the body.

Diet is important in lowering HbA1c. These days in Diabetes management and prevention there is no such thing as a ‘diabetic diet’ just a ‘healthy diet’. If you follow some simple steps you can still enjoy eating but stay healthy.

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals
- Lower your carbohydrate intake at each meal
- Eat a balanced meal (protein, carbohydrate and a small amount of fat)
- Make good food choices

The next important step in lowering HbA1c is **exercise**. Recent studies have shown that exercise alone has greatly improved patients HbA1c levels compared to an increase in medications. This doesn’t mean that you have to go to a gym for hours on end. Exercise comes in many forms, from gardening, walking the dog, to doing some vacuuming. For diagnosed diabetics, medication management is also important in lowering HbA1c, ensuring that you take the correct dose of medication prescribed to you by Dr Pedler and taking it at the correct time.

Good lifestyle choices to prevent diabetes, or to manage diabetes, are not always easy, and you will surely have challenges and setbacks along the way, but that’s what we’re here for! At St Peters Family Practice we have a no cost program to ensure you have a cycle of care that empowers you to understand and best manage diabetes.

[FROM THE DESK OF DR. MARGARET TALOR](#)

Dr. Taylor has a successful integrative medicine practice here at St Peters Family Practice, and in this article she explores an alternative way of REDUCING CHOLESTEROL & HEART ATTACK RISK WITH FISH OIL, CHROMIUM AND VITAMIN C.

New research (in mice who have 85% the same genes as us!) shows that fish oil causes the excretion of 273% more cholesterol than vegetable oil. It also increased the activity of genes in the liver that excrete cholesterol, so that the liver had 76% less cholesterol in it. (Nishimoto 2009).

This has importance for people trying to reduce cholesterol, to reduce risk of heart attacks and stroke. It means that lots of Omega 3, from 1 dessertspoon of fish oil or 9x1000mg capsules will help the metabolism of cholesterol.

We already know that fish oil reduces the really dangerous fat in the blood, called triglyceride (white animal fat), which is more strongly linked to heart attacks and strokes than cholesterol. Many expert cardiologists say that if your triglycerides are low and you have plenty of healthy cholesterol (HDL) there’s no increase in risk if your cholesterol is up to about 6mMol/l. In fact we need cholesterol to make all our hormones that keep us happy and young.

Yes, a high cholesterol is a marker for heart disease – but only because it tells us that the diet is too high in sugar and starch and perhaps fat, and there is not enough lean meat, fish, poultry and vegetables. Do you know that you can eat at least 2 eggs a day and it won’t increase cholesterol?

Cholesterol-lowering drugs, statins, like Lipitor, Zocor, and Lovastatin were assessed in 650 patients by researchers at the University of San Diego. The list of side effects was long and frightening. There is no doubt statins lower LDL cholesterol, the “bad” kind. The problem is, cholesterol isn’t the problem. It may surprise you to learn that 75 percent of heart attack victims have perfectly normal cholesterol levels. And in Croatia they found higher total cholesterol in survivors than those who died of heart attack. In Japan, total cholesterol was lower in heart attack patients than controls – the best predictor was a low HDL (the healthy cholesterol)

The fact is lowering your LDL cholesterol doesn’t protect you from heart disease. You want to raise your HDL, the “good” kind. As long as your HDL is high – around 1.5 or 2 – there’s no reason to worry about your LDL levels.

One clinically proven way to boost HDL levels naturally and safely is to get more lean meat (including fish and chicken) in your diet (it doesn't matter whether it's white or red – both lower total cholesterol by 1% and raise HDL by 2-3%). Also:

- Heavy exercise - HDL levels were 15% higher and triglycerides were 41% lower than in a sedentary group.
- Onions increase HDL by 30% - also garlic
- Dark chocolate 11%
- Olive oil, especially extra virgin olive oil
- Pecans, walnuts, pistachios and other nuts
- Green tea
- 2 boiled eggs increased HDL by 10% and total cholesterol by 4% so that the ratio remained the same.
- Yoghurt
- Red wine 11-16%
- Vitamin C and vitamin E
- Soy protein lowers total cholesterol, LDL and triglycerides and raises HDL
- Apples, bananas, cranberries, mushrooms
- Oatbran 11%
- Curcumin (the yellow colour in turmeric) 29%!

In addition, rather than trying to reduce cholesterol by using a phytosterol-enriched margarine (full of chemicals and excess Omega 6 oil) it is sensible to use **avocado** as your spread if you are still using toast etc (see low carb diet). Avocado has only 15% fats, mostly monounsaturated, compared to 100% fat in margarine, has lots of natural phytosterols and is rich in vitamin E, and folic acid, both of which prevent heart disease. A study in 1992 by Dr Colquhoun in Brisbane, demonstrated that 50% of patients given ½ to 1¼ avocados each day reduced their total cholesterol levels by 8% - 43%.

Chromium 200-500mcg per day reduces total cholesterol and increases HDL as it helps insulin resistance, which is the basic problem from the Western excess sugar and refined carbohydrate diet. Most Western diets are chromium deficient.

Vitamin C 1000mg/day lowers total cholesterol as it is necessary to convert it to bile in the liver.

A Low Carb Diet. This is the best way to formulate your eating plan as it reduces insulin – the main stimulus to making cholesterol.

Thus a good healthy diet and exercise and a few supplements are very effective, cheap and safe, and we can decrease our reliance on drugs.

If you're interested in reading more along these lines, I recommend you go to Dr. Al Sears website www.alsearsmd.com.

