

High Cholesterol Helps Older Americans

“The cholesterol craze is still in full swing. Ironically, some of the people who can benefit the least from cholesterol control are the most involved in this fad. This group is the elderly, and they are being fleeced of millions of dollars for useless testing and therapy.”

Both nine and five years ago, I wrote that if you are getting on in years, your cholesterol has little meaning when it comes to heart attack. I recommended that if you are over 65 years old, you should simply reject cholesterol-lowering therapy and **forget about your cholesterol**. Well, those recommendations were not strong enough. It now turns out that as you get older, your chances of living longer **go up with your cholesterol level**. That’s right, the higher your cholesterol, and the longer your life! Here are the facts:

1. If you are into your senior years, the higher your cholesterol, the longer you will live!
2. In very very senior citizens (‘80s and beyond), the risk of dying falls 15% for each additional 39 points on your cholesterol level.
3. In some folks, low cholesterol is a signal of a life-threatening disease like undiagnosed cancer.
4. In a study report in *The Lancet*, the subjects with low cholesterol experienced the highest rate of death from cancer and infections, while the high cholesterol group suffered least from such problems.
5. Studies in mice support the contention that high cholesterol protects one from infections. Normally mice injected with large quantities of pneumonia-causing bacteria died. The animals with high LDL cholesterol (the so-called **bad** cholesterol) survived the same load of germs.

Now take a moment to consider the cholesterol screening at your local drug stores. Which group makes up most of the people lined up to be tested? Seniors. Who are the people who march off to their doctor with their cholesterol findings? Seniors. Who are the people who are prescribed cholesterol-lowering drugs by their doctor? Seniors. Who are the people told to stay away from eggs, meat, and cholesterol-rich foods? Seniors. And who should ignore the cholesterol fad, recognizing that just because their doctor is ignorant, they don’t have to be? Seniors.

Health Alert—Healing Heart Program