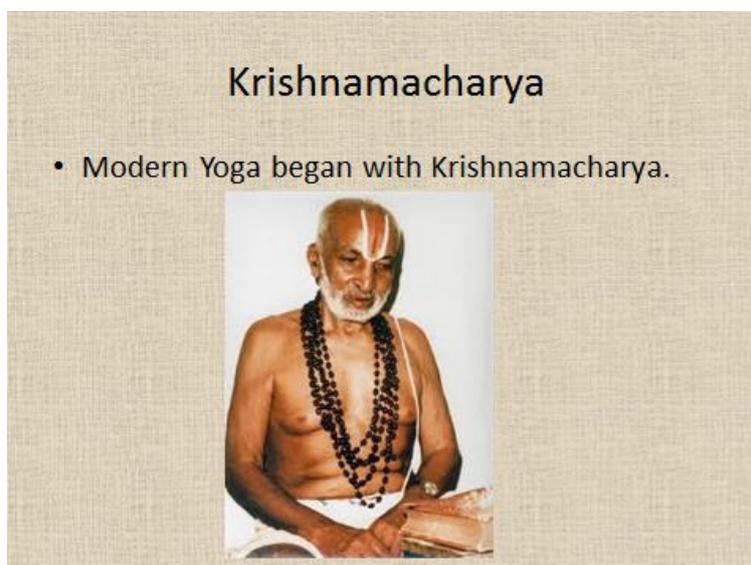
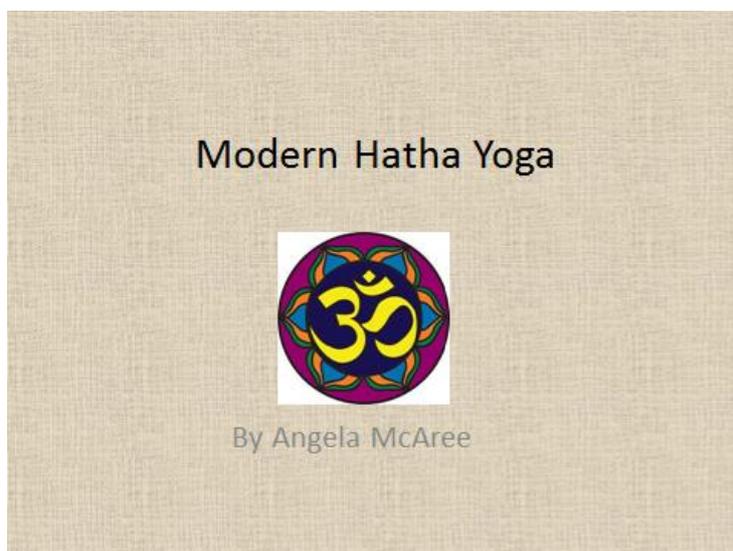


Yoga for people with learning disabilities and difficulties

As part my day job I teach young people with learning disabilities and difficulties at Newcastle under Lyme College as part of a Life Skills and Employment training course. Part of that course is a Yoga class one afternoon per week. As the abilities of the learners can vary tremendously and often they have no idea what Yoga is, I always begin the year by explaining a little about Yoga, its basic history; introduce some famous Yoga teachers and famous Yoga practitioners. I have used the following power point just as a starting point, then expand on it depending on the level of the group. I have found this a very useful tool, if anyone would like me to send it to them please email me and I will be happy to pass it on. Please feel free to amend it to suit your needs.



Krishnamacharya

- Krishnamacharya taught Yoga to the poor people in the villages in India, and also to the rich people in the palaces.



Second Generation

- Krishnamacharya trained his son Desikachar, his son in law Iyengar, and their friend Pottabhi Jois to become Yoga teachers.



Desikachar

- Desikachar decided that the kind of Yoga he would teach would be for people who have health problems and injuries.
- This became known as Yoga Therapy.



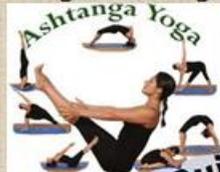
Iyengar

- Iyengar decided that the kind of Yoga he would teach would focus on the alignment of the body in the posture and use lots of props.
- This became known as Iyengar Yoga



Pottabhi Jois

- Pottabhi Jois decided that the kind of Yoga he would teach would be quite strong and flowing. It would have a set sequence of postures, that you follow every time you practise.
- He called his Yoga Ashtanga Yoga



Yoga Teachers Today

- Yoga is practised all over the world today, and there are many famous teachers. Most of them have studied with at least one of the original Yoga teachers. Some famous Yoga teachers today are:
- David Swenson



Famous Yoga Teachers

- Shiva Rea



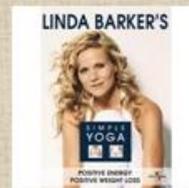
- John Friend



Yoga Today

- Millions of people all over the world practise Yoga, many of them because of the health benefits. There are a lot of famous people who practise Yoga and most of them have done a Yoga dvd or magazine articles.

- Some of them include:



Famous Yoga Practitioners

- Jennifer Aniston



- Gerri Halliwell



Famous Yoga Practitioners

- Sting



- Madonna



Yoga Today

- Anyone can practise Yoga, You don't have to be mega fit, or bendy.... Because all the Yoga postures can be modified to suit anyone.



Namaste

Angela McAree
Email: ange@chilloutman.co.uk

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOLESTEROL:

In the Spring newsletter I wrote an article about good and bad fats and the myths surrounding the demonization of saturated fats. Following on from that is the question of cholesterol and the role it plays in the functioning of our bodies. As with saturated fats, cholesterol has received much negative press, resulting in many people thinking that cholesterol is bad for us, leading to arteriosclerosis which is clogging/hardening of the arteries, restricting blood flow and possibly leading to heart attack.

We have been advised to reduce the amount of saturated fat in our diets and follow a 'low fat' diet instead. Sadly, these 'low-fat' products are full of sugar and trans fats (although this is now improving), which can lead to the onset of diabetes. Despite the uptake of low-fat diets, the incidence of diabetes and obesity have increased during the past twenty years. Among the major hazards of diabetes is the onset of arteriosclerosis and heart attack. Is it time for us to take a step back and have a re-think?

One thing is for sure, the information available on cholesterol is confusing – so much so that it is perhaps difficult to make a valid decision. However, it is worth looking at some of what has come to light in recent years.

Against cholesterol	For cholesterol
Cholesterol is bad for us	Cholesterol is vital for our wellbeing – without it we would die
Saturated fat causes heart attacks	Saturated fat does not cause heart attacks. It may be an indicator of heart disease but there is no evidence that it is the cause.
Foods containing cholesterol raise cholesterol levels	Foods containing cholesterol (ie animal products) do not raise cholesterol levels
We need to lower our cholesterol levels	We don't need to worry about raised cholesterol levels – especially in old age
Testing is important	Testing is inaccurate

So, what is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a steroid, which is a class of organic molecules which occurs naturally in humans. It is a vital component of the cells and is abundant in the brain, nervous tissue and the adrenals. Without it we would most certainly die. Much of the required cholesterol is made by the liver and some also in every cell and the lining of the small intestine. It can also be obtained from food of animal origin, such as meat, eggs and dairy products, preferably not grain fed but kept out at pasture, eating grass and to organic standards. (Note it is now argued that

eating food containing cholesterol does not affect the levels of cholesterol in the body one way or the other because the liver produces less if we ingest more).

It is a soft, waxy, fatty substance which cannot mix with blood.

What is the function of cholesterol? There are three main functions:

- Formation and maintenance of cell membranes
- Precursor to all steroid hormones and to all fat soluble vitamins, A, E, K and D (when the skin is exposed to sunlight)
- Used by the body to produce bile salts, a necessary part of the digestive process to help break down food

Formation and maintenance of cell membranes: It is vital that cell walls are neither too rigid nor too permeable. Cholesterol plays an important role in keeping this balance correct; too rigid and the necessary components of the cell would be unable to gain passage into the cell via specific channels; too flexible and the integrity of the cell would be lost. Our cells communicate with one another and it is cholesterol which helps to facilitate this all-important function, without which we would not be coherent human beings, but simply a heap of unrelated cells.

Precursor to all steroid hormones: including the production of sex hormones; testosterone, progesterone, estradiol (a female sex hormone) and cortisol (produced in the adrenals and plays a role in regulating metabolism. Also plays a role in the stress response). Glucocorticoids (blood sugar regulation). Mineralcorticoids (mineral balance and blood pressure regulation).

Precursor to the production of bile salts: which are important in the intestinal absorption of fat-soluble vitamins and also facilitate the excretion of excess cholesterol in the faeces.

Acts as a precursor to vitamin D when the skin is exposed to sunlight: Vitamin D is important for keeping bones healthy and also for calcium metabolism. It is also thought to be important for mental health, blood sugar regulation and cancer prevention. Good sources of vitamin D are also found in animal fats, and in particular animals that have been out to pasture, eating grass.

How is it carried around the body? As cholesterol is a fatty substance it does not mix with the blood and the liver has to package it in a kind of 'bubble' of protein and other compounds to produce a lipoprotein which can then be transported round the body in the bloodstream.

There are number of different lipoproteins, however, there are three types most of us are familiar with; LDL (low density lipoprotein), Small LDL and HDL (high density lipoprotein).

- **LDL delivers cholesterol to cells in the body**
- **Small LDL contains the most triglyceride which is delivered to body tissues**
- **HDL brings excess cholesterol back to the liver**, which secretes cholesterol in bile, or converts it to bile salts.

We have been given to believe that LDL's are 'bad' and HDL's are 'good'. There is much debate at present as to exactly what this means and how cholesterol should be measured to give the most helpful results. Safe to say, both LDL and HDL are important for obvious reasons as cholesterol needs to be transported from the liver to where it is needed in the body and excess cholesterol brought back to the liver for elimination. Small LDL is thought to be more problematic than LDL as it carries a higher percentage of triglycerides, which are fats derived from the food we eat. Any excess not needed for immediate use by the body is stored in the body tissue and can find its way more readily through artery walls. Excess triglycerides may indicate too much sugar and fat in the diet.

We are all unique individuals and it seems as such, the way our bodies deal with cholesterol, its distribution and elimination varies. It is thought that genetics play an important role which indicates that some may eat perfectly healthy diets, be active and not smoke or drink, yet still have high cholesterol. Alternatively, there are those who lead less healthy lifestyles and still have relatively normal cholesterol levels. The advice is to be tested once every five years; men from the age of 45 and women from the age of 50, although some schools of thought believe we should all be tested every 5 years from the age of 20.

But how accurate is the test? It is now thought that testing for total cholesterol levels with a non-fasting test, is not particularly helpful. Indeed the accuracy of the testing in general (fasting or non-fasting), would seem to be highly questionable. One thing seems to be certain, it is not the cholesterol levels that are tested, it is the lipoprotein levels i.e. the carriers of the cholesterol. As Zoe Harcombe (British obesity specialist) tells us:

"The National Cholesterol 'Education' Programme have no right to educate anyone about cholesterol if they don't know that LDL is not even cholesterol. LDL is Low Density Lipoprotein. LDL contains cholesterol; it is not cholesterol."

(See <http://www.zoeharcombe.com>)

Another point to ponder is that the 'scientific' research carried out in the mid fifties by Ancel Keys, (The Seven Countries Study) which claimed that high cholesterol was the cause of heart disease and started this whole ball rolling, is now deemed to be flawed and unreliable. It has taken in the region of forty years for this to be challenged and for more sound scientific research to take its place.

Some of the most recent research tells us that high amounts of cholesterol present in arteries, eventually leading to a blockage, is there as part of a healing process,

caused by **chronic** inflammation in the artery wall. In other words, cholesterol is the symptom, not the cause. Why does chronic inflammation occur in the artery wall? The consumption of low fat diets and highly processed carbohydrates has the effect of:

“rubbing a stiff brush repeatedly over soft skin until it becomes quite red and nearly bleeding” (Dr. Dwight Lundell MD)

(See <http://www.sott.net/article/242516-Heart-surgeon-speaks-out-on-what-really-causes-heart-disease>)

As is always a sensible guide – all things in moderation would seem to apply. Although the right kinds of fat are no longer demonized as they were, they do need to be eaten in sensible amounts. A whole food diet, with plenty of green vegetables is a good plan. We need to watch the levels of carbohydrates such as flour, pasta and grains, (some say these elements should be removed from our diets altogether), and ensure a sensible amount of protein. Good quality saturated fat, in moderation, is not harmful. Modest levels of alcohol are probably fine for most of us. Refined sugar could be completely eliminated from the diet. Smoking really is a ‘no’ ‘no’.

As I’m sure you will have gathered, this article is by no means conclusive, it merely serves to act as a prompt for you to investigate further the whole issue of cholesterol, its apparent dangers and the testing methods. Nothing is perhaps quite as it seems.

Barbara Tomkinson.

*Also of interest: **Dr. Mercola** on the subject of cholesterol (search the net).*



"That number has nothing to do with the lottery or the stock market. That's your cholesterol level."

Image from Google Images