



May 7, 2016 – Grand Rapids, MI

## Raising HDL: Weight Loss

Before I finish up this week's look at HDL cholesterol, I want to wish every mother a Happy Mother's Day. I hope it's a great day with your children.

The number one way to increase HDL cholesterol is to lose weight. Losing fat helps increase HDL levels while simultaneously lowering LDL cholesterol. We still don't know precisely why, but there's really nothing debatable about it.

I'll give you my theory of why weight loss helps raise HDL cholesterol. In order to lose weight, you have to eat less and/or move more; more than likely, it's a combination of both. When you eat less, you train your body to make less saturated fat. Whether you were eating a higher fat diet or a diet high in refined carbohydrates, the net would be an increase in triglycerides made up of saturated fatty acids: the exact type of fatty acids that our bodies need to make cholesterol. Make less fat, make less cholesterol, and that decreases the LDL cholesterol. That may also be the trigger for the body to stop blunting the APO-A1 gene and make more HDL. Throw in exercise and you can raise the HDL levels even more.



I may or may not be right about the process, but how it works isn't as important as the fact that it does work. While the data are not absolutely clear, raising HDL should reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease. Why not clear? Randomized controlled trials are not long enough to find out, and epidemiological data cannot determine cause and effect. But there's no doubt that people with higher HDL cholesterol have less cardiovascular disease.

There may be one caveat and that's the type of diet that a person uses to lose weight. All the clinical trials are too short to say definitively which diet is the best in the long term, but reducing refined carbohydrates seems to provide better results than a low-fat diet. That's the approach I used in [Energy for Optimal Performance: The Basic Program](#).

Lose weight, reduce refined carbohydrates, exercise, and don't smoke: that's your recipe for increasing HDL cholesterol and reducing your risk of heart disease. So what are you waiting for? Get started today!

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

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