



HEALTH AWARENESS

Creating A Cholesterol Plan

(NAPSA)—A number of Americans have put their hearts into lowering their cholesterol. Yet a recent American Heart Association survey found that many adults with high cholesterol still don't realize that they have an increased risk of developing heart disease.

According to the survey, 50 percent of respondents with cholesterol levels of 200 or greater, and who had risk factors such as high blood pressure or diabetes, did not perceive themselves to be at high risk for cardiovascular disease. Fifteen percent believed they were at low risk. However, the American Heart Association and National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) data indicate that many of these respondents are in danger of having a heart attack within a decade.

Cholesterol guidelines established by both groups show that people with multiple risk factors—smoking, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, etc.—and people with coronary heart disease and other conditions are at high risk of having a heart attack within 10 years.

The findings are the focus of this year's American Heart Association's Cholesterol Low Down program, an effort meant to help teach people about their risk of heart disease. Anyone can join the program by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visiting americanheart.org/cld. Participants receive a Healthy Heart Kit, which includes "The Cholesterol Low Down About Your Cholesterol" guide and a "Low-Fat Favorite Recipes" cookbook. The Cholesterol Low Down is sponsored by Pfizer.

"Patients know that cholesterol is important; however, they need to better understand that their high cholesterol and additional risk factors may lead to heart disease or a stroke," said Roger S. Blumenthal, M.D., associate pro-



fessor of medicine in the Division of Cardiology at Johns Hopkins Hospital and School of Medicine in Baltimore.

Words Of Wisdom

The survey also found that 72 percent of respondents strongly agree that their health care provider is a partner in managing their cholesterol. Those who frequently discuss cholesterol with their health care provider report being well-informed about issues such as setting personal cholesterol goals and the importance of following treatment plans.

"Health care providers are an important and supportive resource for individuals at risk for heart disease and stroke because of their cholesterol and other risk factors," said Lori Mosca, M.D., Director of Preventive Cardiology at New York-Presbyterian Hospital; Associate Professor of Medicine at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. "Patients should work with their doctor to learn if their cholesterol levels are healthy and to develop a plan that includes a healthy diet and physical activity to reduce their risk."