

HEALTH ALERT!

Reduce Your Risk Of A Heart Attack

Regular Cholesterol Tests Help Prevent Cardiovascular Disease

(NAPSA)—Using your mind may help you protect your heart. Heart disease is America's number-one killer. An estimated 60.8 million Americans have some form of heart disease, resulting in 460,000 deaths from heart attack each year. In spite of these grim figures, research shows that heart disease can often be prevented.

"Many of the risk factors for heart attacks can be controlled and possibly eliminated with healthy lifestyle choices," said Arthur McTighe, MD, FCAP, a pathologist in Lewisburg, Pa. "One important risk factor that can be controlled is blood cholesterol level."

Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance found in the bloodstream and in all of the body's cells. While some cholesterol is an important part of staying healthy, recent research shows that too much of the wrong kind of cholesterol increases the risk of heart disease.

"Cholesterol is 'packaged' in molecules called lipoproteins, which carry it through the blood," said Dr. McTighe, a physician who specializes in treating patients through laboratory medicine. "When too much low-density lipoprotein—LDL, or the 'bad' cholesterol—circulates in the blood, it can build up in the walls of arteries. Together with other substances it can form plaque—a thick, hard deposit that can clog those arteries. This condition is known as arteriosclerosis."

If an artery supplying blood to the brain becomes clogged, a stroke can result. If blood flow to the heart is blocked, the result is a heart attack.

Arteriosclerosis can be prevented, however. Since foods high

How To Reduce Your "Bad" Cholesterol:

- Avoid foods with high saturated fat.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise 30 minutes a day.
- Get regular cholesterol tests—for a free reminder, visit www.MyHealthTestReminder.com.



in saturated fat and cholesterol contribute to high LDL cholesterol levels, most doctors recommend reducing fat intake with a low-fat diet. Eating more fruit, vegetables and whole grain foods (which are naturally low in fat) and avoiding fatty cuts of meat, poultry with the skin and whole-milk dairy products are some ways to reduce fat.

In addition, Dr. McTighe recommends regular exercise to maintain a healthy weight and regular blood tests to monitor cholesterol levels. "Typically, a cholesterol test is part of a routine physical, but screenings may also be offered at public and private health fairs," said Dr. McTighe. "Make sure your test results break down LDL cholesterol and triglycerides in addition to total and high-density (HDL) cholesterol. Also, be sure to share cholesterol test results with your regular doctor."

All adults age 20 years or older should have their cholesterol checked every five years. Men over 45 and women over 55 should be tested more frequently, according to their physicians' advice. A free health test reminder by e-mail is available for cholesterol and other important health tests—visit www.MyHealthTestReminder.com to sign up.