

Women's Health **UPDATE**

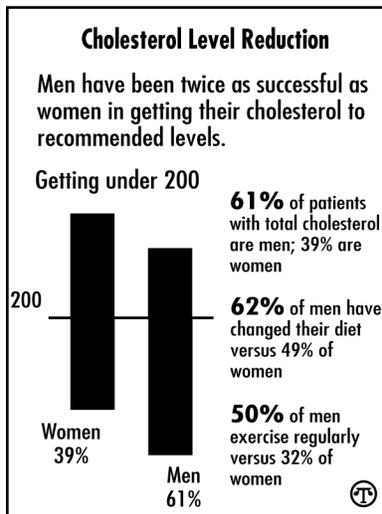
Women Less Effective Than Men In Managing Cholesterol

(NAPS)—A new national survey shows women take a less active role than men do in managing their high cholesterol levels. Today, about one-quarter of American women have blood cholesterol levels high enough to pose a serious risk for heart disease, with about nine million women of all ages currently suffering from the disease.

Despite these startling figures, the survey results show that only 49 percent of women who were diagnosed with high cholesterol changed their diets compared to 62 percent of men, and only 32 percent of women began exercising regularly compared to 50 percent of men. Further, women made up the majority (two-thirds) of patients who were unaware of their cholesterol levels altogether.

"The statistics are disturbing because elevated cholesterol and heart disease are just as serious in women as they are in men, yet women may not be doing enough to combat it," said Gerald Wilson, director of Citizens for Public Action on Blood Pressure and Cholesterol. Wilson's organization sponsored the survey in conjunction with Sankyo Pharma of 500 adults (325 women) with elevated cholesterol levels.

The survey results echo Wilson's comments, indicating that once diagnosed with elevated cholesterol levels, men (58 percent) are almost twice as successful as women (30 percent) in getting



their total cholesterol below the recommended level of 200 mg/dL. These numbers could be attributable to the fact that women are less likely than men to be taking drugs to reduce their cholesterol (56 percent vs. 66 percent respectively). Women are also more apprehensive than men about the side-effect risk of passage of a drug via the bloodstream through the liver and kidneys (82 percent vs. 69 percent respectively).

Overall, 91 percent of patients expressed interest in a drug that would pass through their system without being absorbed.

The introduction of WelChol (colesevelam HCl) by Sankyo Pharma may be an answer. It offers patients a non-absorbed cholesterol-lowering option. Wel-

Chol, now available by prescription in pharmacies nationwide, can be used alone or with a "statin" drug to effectively lower LDL-cholesterol or "bad" cholesterol as adjunctive therapy to diet and exercise.

Cholesterol is the principal building block for bile acids, which help us digest food. WelChol works by binding to bile acids in the intestine and taking those bile acids with it as it leaves the body. The body responds naturally by drawing LDL cholesterol from the bloodstream to replenish the supply, resulting in an overall lowering of cholesterol in the bloodstream.

Since WelChol is not absorbed into the bloodstream, it has few unwanted side effects. The most common side effects are gas, constipation, infection, stomach discomfort, and headache. You should not take WelChol if you have a bowel obstruction or if you are overly sensitive to any of the ingredients of WelChol listed in the prescribing information.

Cholesterol management is an important health consideration for men and women alike, so be sure to request a cholesterol screening from your healthcare provider. If you have elevated cholesterol, your doctor can also help you define your cholesterol goals and explain your treatment options. For more information on WelChol, call 1-877-4-SANKYO (1-877-472-6596).

The survey was conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide.