

Women's Health Q&A



• **Q: I have a history of high cholesterol in my family. So far, my cholesterol has been okay. What can I do to make sure I keep it in a healthy range for as long as I can?**

• **A:** Oh, genetics! Like we talked about, family history is a non-modifiable risk factor. However, we can make sure we are maintaining a healthy life style despite family history. For cholesterol, making sure you are eating a diet rich in whole grains, fiber, fruits and vegetables and healthy fats like fish, avocado, nuts and olive oil will help keep your cholesterol numbers healthy. Also, saturated fat can raise our bad cholesterol so strive to make no more than 7% of your total calories come from saturated fat per day. You can do this by eating low fat dairy products, using vegetable oils rather than butter, cooking most meals at home and limiting processed foods. Lastly, physical activity is crucial for healthy cholesterol numbers. Move as much as you can even in between scheduled exercise! If you continue to lead a healthy lifestyle but your cholesterol falls out of a healthy range, talk to your doctor about other options.

• **Q: After this presentation I learned how much of an impact stress can have on my mental wellbeing. I am not experiencing signs of depression yet, but I want to make sure I manage my stress before it impacts my emotional wellbeing. Where do I start?**

A: Not managing our stress can cause issues! The first step to managing stress is to find out what your stressors are! That sounds sill because it's so easy to say "work", or "marriage", or "children". But ask yourself what ABOUT your job, marriage and/or children stresses you out? We can't make stress disappear but we can set ourselves up for better resilience to stress through proper sleep, exercise, a healthy diet and making time to do things you enjoy. Learning to say "no" to commitments you might resent or don't have the time for can help us manage our stress. Asking for help from co-workers, loved ones and friends can help us to manage our stress. Also, consider practicing mindfulness and other relaxation techniques. The bottom line is, if you think stress is impacting your emotional well-being than taking the time to manage your stress is vital to a more meaningful life

