

Summary of the February 20, 2011 Program**“Living Long and Healthy”**

By Dr. Vijaya Koka, MD

Dr. Vijaya Koka, M.D. is board certified in Internal Medicine and Cardiovascular diseases and Nuclear Medicine. He is a member of the Cardiovascular Institute of Central Florida. Dr. Koka graduated medical school in 1976 and did his residency in internal medicine. After ten years of practice he immigrated to the United States where he did his residence in internal medicine and fellowship in New York and then settled here in Ocala. Dr. Koka enjoys playing tennis, traveling and ballroom dancing. He spoke with the North Central Florida Post Polio Support Group at their February 20, 2011 meeting and presented a program on “Living Long and Healthy.”

Dr. Koka began by asking the question, “What is more important, exercise or diet?” The answer is both. Over 100,000 years ago people were hunters and gatherers. Our genes have not yet adapted to the type of diet we follow today. As babies, our LDL or “bad” cholesterol was around 40 or 45. The average adult has an LDL cholesterol level of 130 to 140. This is also the case for domesticated cats and dogs. The average LDL cholesterol level for other mammals is 40 to 45. Only humans living in primal forests or Eskimos in igloos have an LDL level of 40 or 45.

LDL is bad cholesterol, HDL is good cholesterol and triglycerides are 1/5 of your total cholesterol level. If you have a blockage or diabetes, your triglyceride level should be less than 100. If you have both it should be less than 70.

Bad cholesterol can be treated with medicines such as statins, niacin, Zetia, or tri-lipids.

Exercise can help raise your HDL or good cholesterol. HDL should be over 50 in women, who produce more HDL due to the production of estrogen. Men should have an HDL level of over 40. Risk factors for bad cholesterol and high triglycerides are smoking, stress, hypertension, and ancestry. Risk factors for high triglycerides are higher in individuals who are overweight or have diabetes.

Others with high risk factors have Metabolic Syndrome. The Body Mass Index determines if you are at risk. If your weight exceeds your BMI then you are at risk especially if you have the most fat in the areas of your waist and abdomen.

Eating natural foods such as whole grains, milk, vegetables, fruits, and fibers have an average taste. Processed foods containing higher amounts of fine sugar, corn syrup and having less fiber tend to taste better. This leads to putting yourself at risk. Avoid soda, regular or diet. People who drink large amounts of soda are more prone to developing heart disease. Drinking diet soda and eating a hamburger and French fries with it defeats the purpose of the sugar-free beverage. Drinking water is much healthier. Consumption of carbonated beverages has recently gone up 60% in adults and 100% in children.

Coronary Heart Disease involves the blockage of blood flow in the arteries. Heart failure

means the heart is not pumping the blood and oxygen your body needs. Ischemic Heart Disease means there is a low oxygen supply due to a narrowing of the coronary arteries from plaque build-up on the inner walls which prevents delivery of oxygen to tissues when the demand exceeds the supply. Atherosclerosis causes heart attacks and strokes. Unstable plaque deposits of fat, cholesterol, calcium and other sludge from your blood leads to ruptures. PAD (peripheral artery disease) occurs when plaque builds up on the major arteries of the legs, arms and pelvis. Eight million men and women under the age of 40 have PAD. Infarction is an area of tissue death in the heart due to a lack of oxygen.

Non-Ischemic Heart Disease develops due to a weak heart caused by alcohol, drugs or chemo-therapy, hypertension, valve abnormalities, viral infections, and chronic lung disease.

Broken Heart Syndrome is caused by stress.

Congenital Heart Disease is the result of a hole in the heart or other abnormalities causing weakness.

Irregular heartbeat (Atrial Fibrillation) effects 2.2 million people in the United States and six million people worldwide.

Plaque can be stabilized if you follow a healthy diet, exercise and take medications such as statins and niacin to help reduce blockages. Statins, niacin and Co-Q10 can help make arteries healthy.

Dr. Koka answered other questions about how people with Post Polio Syndrome can take better care of themselves through diet and getting the exercise needed. He recommended exercising in a pool where the temperature is between 89 and 90 degrees in order to prevent a reaction to cold water and always with a therapist who knows about post polio syndrome.

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Summary by Sharon Daszczyński for Polio Post News