



Episode 15

Hey Cholesterol! I'm Taking You Down!

Hi, this is Toni Julian and I am the host of Toni Talks - Humanity Matters. I'm so appreciative that you've taken the time to tune back into my podcast today. I feel like this is such a great platform for us to connect, to learn, to be open to new things, to grow together, and to be able to survive and get through this very unusual world and events that are happening around us today.

And one thing that I do know is that we can't control what goes on around us, but we can control how we behave and how we react to it. So, one question that I had was from one of my clients recently, and she asked, what do I eat if I have high cholesterol? Great question. And, what do you not eat? And there are so many things that go into making sure your cholesterol levels are even and where they need to be in a healthy range.

And it's unfortunate when we get that lab report back and - maybe this has happened to you - but we get it back and our LDL is high and our HDL is low and our overall triglyceride levels are high. So, what do you do? Did I do something to deserve this? Well, it is just a combination of things. It is how you live, it's what you eat and what genes you've inherited. So, we can't do anything about the third one that I mentioned, but we can certainly do something about the first and the second and primarily the third, which is what we eat is critical to it. I'm going to put everything on the table here as far as content goes and as far as what I'm about to talk about in terms of cholesterol, because in our society, we have the freedom to believe what we want. And I am not here to get you to change camps on anything. You may have certain notions that you hold to be true to you, and I am not here to change that. But what I do want to do is I want to be able to talk with you about some things that are based on facts, that are based on science, that are based on my experience.

And I can only do research and have certain experiences and learn from that and share that with you, with the understanding and knowing that 10 years from now, 20 years from now, things may be different, things may change. We may have learned more as a society from our medical institutions, from our own experiences.

So, what I'm about to share is a snapshot of kind of where we are now. And if you're here to learn about what you can do to reduce your unhealthy cholesterol levels, and if you are open to listening to all that, then you are absolutely in the right place. And some people are as fervent about their diets as they are religion.

There are all kinds of crazy diets being touted as the next best thing right now - we're going to reset your metabolism! We're going to jump start this! We're going to hack you – bio-hack that! Well, that's great, but what it comes down to is your lifestyle. And you may believe these things and you may not believe these things.

And the sad thing is that most information is now so politicized. So, what I ask, and I ask this of you in every single podcast, and as you move about your day and as you go through your life, just do your own research. Be careful. Now, more than ever, do your research, check the source. Don't accept everything at face value because we all need to be discerning.

This isn't a coincidence, but that was my message to you in our very first podcast of Toni Talks – Humanity Matters is, please be discerning. And our social media has just spawned a ridiculous amount of divisiveness around our beliefs and we've created this monster. And now we must live with it. So, you will find conflicting, diametrically opposed information on just about anything. You can Google right now – is bacon good for me? Is bacon good for my arteries? And you might find an article that says yes, eat as much bacon as you can. This fat is just going to clean your arteries, you're going to feel great, it is so good for you. Well, I know that's not true, but that's all right. My point is you will find anything to build a case if you are looking to build a case around any particular position. Given all that, I just ask that you make educated decisions. I know you're a smart person; otherwise, you wouldn't be here to begin with. So here we go.

I am a firm believer in whole foods, in the right amounts, with lots of variety, so you get all the nutrients you need, so you can avoid disease and set yourself up for good, healthy vibrancy and energy so you can get through anything in life, including these crazy days ahead of us and the days that we've been experiencing.

So, let's talk about cholesterol. Let's talk about ways that we can reduce it. And let's talk about ways of reducing it naturally. Right? There are other ways to reduce it. There's medication, of course. However, I'm a firm believer in changing your lifestyle habits incrementally so that it's sustainable. And why not give that a chance first if your doctor's in agreement. So, if you do not need medication immediately for a dire health concern, of course, that is all up to your doctor. But if your doctor is on board with this, why not start with sustainable lifestyle changes? In fact, any good doctor, if you go to talk to them, and you realize that your cholesterol levels are high, and I'm talking about your LDL, your low density lipoproteins, they will start talking to you about lifestyle changes. And not everybody wants to hear that - a lot of people want a pill. They want a quick fix. They want something that they can just take and still be able to have their, you know, some of their lifestyle, some of their eating choices that maybe aren't optimal for them, or maybe they're sedentary.

But you know, these lifestyle changes are really where we need to start. If you go into that first phase of making those lifestyle changes, and if it's not enough, or if you're not adhering

well enough, or if your genes may be are just like fighting you on it, then maybe you need to go on medication. And that's what your doctor will guide you through.

Now, if you start on medications though, right away, then there are side effects you may have to deal with. So rather than, in your life, relying on quick fixes, I'm an advocate of making sustainable changes, so you will continue to reap all kinds of benefits out of that.

Let's say you have high LDL cholesterol. When I say LDL, what I like to think of is the lousy, the low density one – to help me remember it, I think of it as the lousy one. Say you eat bacon and sausage, and you butter your toast and you love your runny eggs. Well, all of that is extremely high, unhealthy cholesterol, and you could take a pill like a statin, which helps lower your cholesterol. But what you're not taking into consideration is that the unhealthy food can create more than one issue. So, there has been research that has shown that processed meats can contribute to not just heart issues, but colon cancer and a host of other maladies. So why not just do the right thing to begin with?

There was some interesting research that came out by the CDC. This was just published last month, and this will alarm you. And if it doesn't - well, I bet it will. It alarmed me. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States. One person dies every 36 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease. That's about 655,000 Americans who will die from heart disease each year. So that's one in every four deaths. And heart attacks - when you have a heart disease, heart attacks are generally more severe in women than they are in men. And in fact, in the first year after a heart attack, women are more than 50% more likely to die than men are. And the first six years after a heart attack, women are almost twice as likely to have a second heart attack. Boy, if there's not a better argument for making lifestyle changes now and being proactive, this is it.

We've been talking about COVID and the deaths with COVID and yes, it is an incredibly serious dark disease to get, but let's look at heart attacks. The number of heart attacks are just astronomical. All right, so let's talk a little bit about cholesterol in your body. And our body does need cholesterol. It's a precursor to some, hormonal like estrogens and that kind of thing. And our liver makes pretty much all the cholesterol our body needs. So, we don't need to add more cholesterol on top of it. Cholesterol and other fats are carried in our bloodstream in little spherical particles called lipoproteins. And our body makes pretty much all we need in the liver, as I mentioned before, and we use that cholesterol to make hormones and vitamin D and other substances.

So, there are two kinds of lipoproteins that I want to talk about. And one is low density, the LDL, and the other is high density, the HDL. There are other types of fats that course through our blood, but we're not going to talk about those today. We're going to focus on these two, because these are the ones that we really take a look at when we look at lab reports. Of course, we look at triglycerides too and some of the other things, your doctor will do that. But these are the things, when we talk about nutrition, that I really like to keep an eye on, because we can correlate these and directly relate these to foods that we eat. Which foods can help us lower the LDL and which foods can increase our HDL, or healthy particles that - H for healthy, L for lousy.

The healthy particles are called our good cholesterol because some of them actually remove cholesterol from our circulation and from the artery walls and they return it to the liver for processing. And then eventually our body will excrete it. All right? So that's why we want to keep our HDL high. Our LDL - we want to keep it low because these particles are really rich in pure cholesterol. And a lot of the triglycerides that they carry are gone, but the LDL is known as the bad cholesterol because it delivers cholesterol to our tissues. And it's strongly associated with all the research done with the buildup of plaque that is in our arteries.

So how do we reduce our cholesterol quickly? The number one thing you can do is you can eat whole heart healthy foods in the right proportion. I tend to categorize foods into a few different categories. One is lean protein. The second is complex carbohydrates. And the third is healthy fats. And if you listened to any of my other podcasts, you'll know that I break them down that way, because it's just a really helpful way to visualize the different food categories and the benefits of what they can do for us.

The first would be proteins. The proteins that are really great for us to eat would be wild salmon, herring, mackerel, pork tenderloin - that's that center cut of the pork that's very lean - chicken breasts, lean ground turkey, egg whites and some wild game like venison. And we want to also add whey protein, which is found in dairy products and also as a powdered supplement, as you know, because that may account for a lot of the health benefits that have been shown. That whey protein, when it's given as a supplement, lowers LDL cholesterol, and also total cholesterol, as well as can lower your blood pressure. So whey protein is just an excellent way to go. It's completely lean and super convenient. You can eat it in smoothies or other types of things.

The next category would be complex carbohydrates, and 70% of your foods should come from this category, which means plant based foods. And some plants contain sterols and stanols which sound a little similar - sterols, S T E R O L S and stanols, S T A N O L S. And these are found in very small amounts in plants. They're kind of like cholesterol, but they're different. And what they do is they help block the body from absorbing cholesterol. So when you eat these plants, they actually do a great job of helping you already with regulating your cholesterol levels. There was a study that Harvard did - Harvard School of Medicine - and they say that sterols and stanols that are extracted from the plants actually gums up the body's ability to absorb cholesterol from food. So that's great news! The majority of the cholesterol, as I mentioned before, is already produced by our liver, but that other say 20% that we are taking in - this helps create kind of a barrier to that. So companies are now adding them into foods and it gets into that functional food category where they're adding them into foods just to help the body block that.

I love functional foods. That's a whole different topic. I could get into that and talk for hours, but let's continue on. When you get about two grams of plant sterols or stanols a day, it can actually lower your LDL by about 10%, which is huge. So to me, when you make a concerted effort and you incorporate your fruits and your veggies, and your starchy vegetables and your whole grains - all of these things combined make a tremendous difference in what you're getting as far as the benefits that these foods are bringing your body and also what you are not eating, which is not taking in a lot of those unhealthy fats to begin with.

So let's get into the specifics - let's talk fruit. The fruits that are great for you along these lines are avocados and apples, pomegranates and bananas, and citrus fruits, such as oranges, lemons, grapefruits, and limes. And then vegetables - all vegetables are amazing for you. They have just a host of phytonutrients to help keep you healthy. But especially carrots and peas have a lot of these properties that are really helpful in helping you lower your blood cholesterol levels.

And then another thing you can do is really increase your soluble fiber. Soluble fiber is fiber that your body takes in. There's also another kind of fiber called insoluble that your body does not break down. Soluble fiber can really help you reduce the absorption of cholesterol into your bloodstream. And it's found in foods like oatmeal and kidney beans and brussels sprouts, apples and pears. Lots of good food. It is also found in some of your starchy vegetables, like beans. And all beans are really created equally as far as calories and a lot of the nutritional benefits, but the ones that are particularly good for helping to lower cholesterol are kidney beans, navy beans, black beans, pinto, and cannellini. So there are some great beans to stock up on. They're great if you have the time to soak it overnight and then you can either pressure cook it or put it in a crock pot and let it cook all day. But if you don't have that kind of time, canned beans are also perfectly fine. The downside, though, of the canned beans are that they are very high in sodium. When you open that can, rinse it thoroughly and you'll be able to reduce the sodium content by about 80%. And according to Harvard Medical School, the number one way to reduce your cholesterol - this is their number one if you Google it, their number one way to reduce it - is by eating oatmeal, which is those whole grains, that soluble fiber that helps reduce that absorption of cholesterol into your bloodstream.

Oatmeal contains soluble fiber, and that reduces your LDL cholesterol, the bad cholesterol. And it's also found in foods as in some of those beans that we were just talking about. So how much oatmeal do you need to lower your cholesterol? That is a really good question. Do you need to eat it three times a day? I would hope not. In one serving of oatmeal, there are three grams of soluble fiber, and that's in about a cup and a half, which is a lot to eat in one serving. It's usually about a cup, but what you can do is have it in meal bars or some other things kind of toward the end of the day, or you can sprinkle it into some other foods or make a smoothie out of it. And you'll find you can pretty much hit that fiber goal by the end of the day without any trouble. When you do this - eating just one and a half cups of cooked oatmeal a day, it can lower your cholesterol by between five to 8%. So that's huge!

And oatmeal contains soluble and insoluble fiber, the two types that your body needs. Now, when we talk about different types of oatmeal, there are many different kinds. There are steel cut and there's whole rolled oats. And then there are instant oats as well. And the two that are the best for you would be the steel cut - and the only downside to that is that because of the way that oat growth is cut on a diagonal, it makes them very thick and you do have to cook them on the stove top. There's really no way around that. Or you could have whole rolled oats, which are lightly steamed and then they're rolled. So that they're thinner, so you don't really have to cook them, or at least not as much. You can add hot water to it. You can microwave it if you like. And both of those types of oatmeals or oats are equally nutritious. When you get to instant oats, they're really fairly processed. They're not just

steamed, but they're shaved and you end up losing a lot of the really good nutrients out of it, so instant oats are not ideal.

I thought that Harvard research was really interesting. If you can adjust your cholesterol by five to 8%, that's pretty significant. If that's just the one thing that you do, that's huge. Right? And then another thing you can do is increase your healthy fats. So your omega threes and your omega threes are found in foods like flax seed meal, flax seed oil, avocado oil, nuts and seeds such as walnuts and almonds. So what happens is when you increase these omega threes, it contributes to increasing your HDL. And as we talked about earlier, when you increase your HDL, it helps actually remove some of that LDL from your blood, from your arteries. You know, it just helps lower it.

So if you're hitting it at both ends, if you're reducing your saturated fat intake and you are increasing your fiber and you're increasing your healthy fats, you're allowing your body to work for you instead of against you. So that's a great thing.

Then when it comes to beverages, I wanted to talk about this with you too. I was excited to see this - drinks like green tea are so full of antioxidants. That's another great way that has been shown in research to help lower cholesterol levels. Plus it does a host of other good things for you. And one thing that I found was - there was some research on coffee and boy, this was kind of new to me - is that, you know how sometimes these French presses are becoming more popular? Well, that is not filtered, and what happens is that in coffee that's unfiltered, there is some of the residual oil that is known to increase cholesterol levels. So what happened is like in the 1950's, coffees were really percolated and they didn't have those coffee filters, those little baskets or the paper filters. What happens now is since that time, those filters have been shown to actually reduce or remove some of those oils that contribute. So if you do drink coffee - I love coffee; I love decaf mostly, but every now and then I'll have a little caffeine, but I really try to stay away from it best I can - is to just make sure that your coffee is filtered and then you will be in fine shape.

All right. Foods to avoid. Here we go. Number one, you've all heard about saturated fats. Those are those fats that contribute to your LDL. So animal proteins that are high in saturated fats, you know, when you see a piece of steak that's been cooked, or even uncooked, and you see marbling in it, those are really saturated fats, right? So if you cook a piece of meat and you don't see marbling, that means a lot of that fat, some of that fat has been cooked out, but it's still there. And when you take a look at a piece of raw steak, for example, and there's a lot of marbling, like if you're going to eat that, I would just try to go for a leaner cut.

Obviously, you know, we can always cut the fat off from around the edges and that's all great, but that fat is so highly marbled that no matter what you do, those fattier cuts of beef are just going to do nothing to help you with your cholesterol levels. So the fattiest cuts of beef are like New York strip and then ribeye. And ribeye has the most fat compared to other cuts, which, if you see it described, you'll see food companies that describe these cuts are saying that's why it's just so tender and juicy and flavorful. Well, all that flavor comes from fat, all that fat is saturated and any fat that is saturated will be solid at room temperature. And that's how you know, versus like the olive oils and avocado oils and flax seed oils, which

are not solid at room temperature. So that's how we know. And you can see in prepared or processed meats like salami and sausages and pepperoni. Oh cheese, that's another one, right? So that high fat dairy. If you are serious about reducing your cholesterol, I would seriously cut out all of these animal proteins that are high in saturated fats and just stick with the ones like chicken breasts, not chicken thighs. You want to stick with things like pork tenderloin and just egg whites, right? So super lean cuts of meat. That will go a long way.

When it comes to other types of fats or the saturated fats, then obviously I know you've heard of trans fats, and that is sometimes listed on food labels as partially hydrogenated vegetable oil. I'll say that again, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, which is used in margarine and some store-bought cookies and crackers and things. It is a cheap way to get those fats into those processed foods and also helps make them shelf stable. And those trans fats, they do raise the overall cholesterol level.

The FDA has allowed these trans fats in foods for decades. And these trans fats have come into our lives right around the seventies. So since the seventies, our cholesterol levels in the United States have gone up and up and up and up and up. And then finally they started going down. Now they are going up again. So what is with that? If we go into the grocery store, you've heard of perimeter shopping in the grocery store, going around the aisles, around the produce. That's where the healthier foods are. And then the center aisles are really processed foods and these processed foods - so many of them, you have to be very adept at label reading because you will find these hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils and trans fats in many, many, many foods. So look, let's just eliminate those. Let's vote with our pocketbook at the registers and quit buying that crap. We need to stop doing that.

Don't stock it at home. If it's not at home, you won't be tempted to eat it. I know so many people who do so well on their diets, but they still eat those few cookies a day, or they still have these habits that will undermine them. And you are not going to be able to reverse a high cholesterol situation by hanging on to those habits.

But let's at least make sure that we eliminate some of these things out of our diet so we're not bombarding our systems with these saturated fats. And trans fats.

Another thing to eliminate would be refined grain. So anything white - white flour, white rice - that all contributes to high-glycemic index and metabolizing these foods too quickly, which will increase the calories and our need for, you know, going into fat storage and raising these levels of fats in our bloodstream.

And then what also does that is alcohol. When it comes to unhealthy beverages, women need to limit drinks to one a day. And I don't know about you, but if I have a glass of wine, I'll probably have two, so I have found for me that I am better off just not drinking. So that works for me. And for a man it's two drinks a day. And in spite of the health benefits that are associated with drinking red wine, the research is now showing that the downsides are far greater when it comes to your heart health and diabetes prevention. Let's make sure that we do these things in moderation.

I have a couple of tools that can help you in your quest to lower your cholesterol.

One of them is that very soon, not just yet, but I think in about another month, I'm going to be offering a 12-week program that is going to help you dial in your cholesterol, rein it in! So the goal is to lower your LDL and increase your HDL, your healthy cholesterol. It is to help people gain control of what I call the COVID-19, which is so many people have come to me and said, I have gained the COVID 19 - what do I do? All right. So there is weight management. If you can drop a few pounds, that will help lower your cholesterol, if you can incorporate the right foods and the right amounts at the right times of the day, that will help you lower your cholesterol. If you can be active and move your body and have a routine that you can do at home, then that is going to help you lower your cholesterol. Something like 30 minutes a day, for most days of the week, your lifestyle will help you lower your LDL.

I have a program, if you want to reach out to me, if you want to get some information, you can just email me at info@tonijulian.com. And I can send you some preliminary information on it.

I have coached many people over the last 12 or 13 years or so. And one of my clients I recently coached – and I did a lot of one-on-one coaching in the past, and I am working on programs right now that I am going to be able to put online to make it not only more affordable, but to be able to really up-level with videos and content and information so that you can go through some of these programs a little more self-paced and then reach out if you need direct assistance from me, direct conversations and customizations.

So I have a client who wrote to me, she was so sweet, her name's Guiselle, and Guiselle - you'll probably hear this. And Guiselle said "I'm very happy to let you know that I received the latest cholesterol test results. After three months, I was able to successfully lower my total cholesterol by 37 points, as well as the rest of the numbers across the board." So that was wonderful to hear. And she said, and without medications. Yay Guiselle! And she said "I wanted to thank you so very much for all your help, guidance and encouragement throughout this journey. It was hard at the beginning, but once I got used to the new diet routine, it was easy to follow. I could not have done this without the customized diet plan you put together for me and introducing me to all the different ways I can eat healthy, and at the same time, keep enjoying the foods I love.' Yay Guiselle - I love that! "You definitely taught me that by making small changes in my diet, as well as my lifestyle, I can lead a healthier and much happier life. You are the best Toni." So that was wonderful from her. It was great to be able to work with her and put all of these thoughts and ideas and tools into action.

And one thing that I want to share with you -if you haven't already, and I know many of my listeners are already doing this - but if you haven't tried it yet, I have a very healthy lifestyle company, as you know, and some of the healthy food products that we make are very, very functional foods. And they were designed to really be the best of everything.

So if you look at all the diseases, heart disease, diabetes, issues that people have as they get older in life and as they, as their diets, I'll put it this way – look, as their diets catch up with them. I don't know any other way to put that. Everybody needs tools to get back on track.

And so if you have not tried this, I have a sampler pack of our five protein meals - they're basically hot oatmeals, but you can also have them cold in smoothies. You can eat them either way. And I have five single serving flavors as a sampler pack on my website. And what I can do is offer free shipping to you. It's a one-time deal. So if you've already taken advantage of it, which you may have, our system will say, I'm sorry, you're not allowed to do that twice. So it's a one-time opportunity where you can get up to two sampler packs of my protein meals and plus up to two boxes of our meal bars. And you can do any combination. You can just do one of these sampler packs, or you can do one protein meal bar box, or you can do four total items of two and two each, whatever you want to do, whatever appeals to you. The protein oatmeal is great because you can add hot water to it or you can have it cold and in a smoothie with just like one cup of almond milk and seven ice cubes. And it makes the most amazing smoothie. I added some greens to it that were frozen from my freezer the other day. And I've been eating that pretty much every day in the morning. And that gives you almost all of the fiber you need in a day.

So the ingredients - which dovetails so beautifully into our entire conversation - is that oats provide the soluble and insoluble fiber that you need to help lower your blood cholesterol levels. Whey protein in there, you get 18 grams of whey protein and egg white proteins that help lower your LDL, your total cholesterol and your blood pressure. So whey protein, as I mentioned earlier, according to Harvard is a great way to do that. And then also in these protein meals are flaxseed meal, and this is enough omega three that you need. It's the right proportion of omega threes that you need for your entire day. And those Omega-3's, if you'll remember help carry those LDLs to the liver for processing. And because I believe everyone should eat like a Diabetic so they don't become one, there are no added sugars. The only sugar is in the fruit. There is one flavor where I have some little chocolate chips. I believe it's under one gram.

So essentially, very balanced macros that are designed to metabolize super slowly so it helps regulate your blood sugar, keeps you full for hours and will, when you incorporate it into your diet on a daily basis, help you lower your cholesterol.

So I hope you all take advantage of the opportunity for free shipping. It's really the best that I could do to get it to you, to get it into your hands, especially with COVID. We are not doing any food demos. They're not allowed in stores right now. And I am happy to ship it to you, to Hawaii, to New York, to wherever you may be, for free. You just pay for the food, but you'll get five great meals out of it, at least.

Thank you so much for listening and tune in next time to Toni Talks – Humanity Matters. Feel free to check out so much information that I have on my website. It's at tonijulian.com, and I have more podcasts, blogs, tons of recipes, resources, and my protein meals that I mentioned to you earlier to keep you healthy and going strong.

And I've also come out with some new protein granola clusters that are literally so amazing, they will knock your Nike's off! They're really good, no added sugars. And our meal bars are so good. They are also zero net carbs, if you're looking for a lower carbohydrate alternative.

Thank you so much for listening. God bless you from my heart to yours. I love you with all my heart. I can't say that enough. And I hope you stay healthy and well until next time.

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