

Inflammation: The Silent Killer CRP-HS

Chronic inflammation in the body is the root cause of many medical conditions including cardiovascular disease. Other diseases related to inflammation are diabetes, depression, hypertension and Alzheimer's disease. Inflammation affects the walls of the arteries and increases risk for **plaque formation** and **plaque rupture**; the causes of heart attacks and strokes. (See below)

Inflammation is the body's natural defense mechanism to fight off infection, toxins and foreign molecules. If the natural balance of our immune system is disrupted, it can shift into a chronic state of alarm. Chronic inflammation affects our entire body.

CRP-HS or C-Reactive Protein - Highly Sensitive is a simple blood test that measures the amount of inflammation in the body and predicts risk for heart disease.

Causes of inflammation:

Clear reasons for inflammation include arthritis, infection and injury.

Other causes that may be silent and insidious:

- Diet high in sugar, refined flour, trans and saturated fats and processed food
- Overweight, especially abdominal fat
- Smoking
- Lack of exercise
- Stress, physical and emotional
- Sleep deprivation (less than 7 hours per night)
- Toxins (mercury, lead)
- Food allergies such as gluten and dairy
- Nutritional deficiencies including Vitamins D, B, C and omega 3 fatty acids

How do we lower inflammation?

- Diet **LOW** in trans/saturated and low glycemic index carbohydrates, **HIGH** in monounsaturated fats, fruits and vegetables. Avoid foods high in arachidonic acid (egg yolk, shellfish, red meat). Increase anti-inflammatory foods and spices, such as cold water fish, green tea, onion, garlic, turmeric and ginger.
- Exercise most days of the week
- Smoking cessation
- Weight loss
- Omega 3 fatty acid supplement
- Fruit and vegetable supplement if necessary
- Stress management
- Adequate sleep
- Medications including Statins, Fibrates, Niacin and some Diabetes medication

