



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2022

### **FITNESS FOCUS**

#### **CORTISOL & STRESS**

##### **CAN IMPACT OUR WAISTLINE**

There is evidence that stress may play a role in abdominal obesity. It is not uncommon to have difficulty losing “weight around the middle.” People are often frustrated when regular exercise and a healthier diet do not result in weight loss.

Evidence also suggests that a hormone called cortisol may play a role in the development of obesity. Cortisol is a hormone released by the adrenal glands that is very useful when released as part of our daily rhythm. This hormone is released in response to stress and is part of the “fight or flight” response to stressful situations.

Chronic stress may increase levels of cortisol. Increased cortisol levels (measured in scalp hair) are strongly related to abdominal obesity, but not all obese people have elevated cortisol levels.

In addition to increased belly fat, elevated cortisol levels may be associated with a weaker immune system and elevated blood pressure. There is a body of evidence that in order to lose belly fat, people who suffer chronic stress need to do the following to lose weight (in addition to diet and exercise):

- Decrease stress levels at work and home. Exercise, meditate, and don't make exercise another stressful “duty.”
- Restore good sleep patterns.
- Omega-3 fish oil might be helpful in reducing cortisol levels as part of an overall fitness program.

### HEALTH TIP



#### **LOW DENSITY LIPOPROTEIN (LDL): WHEN TO TREAT**

Regardless of age or cardiac risks, a healthy lifestyle is the foundation for preventing heart disease and decreasing the risk of further cardiac events. Regular exercise and a healthy diet are key to this effort for all age groups. The 2018 American College of Cardiology / American Heart Association guidelines will help with decision-making about using a statin medication to lower cholesterol.

A few numbers are key in these guidelines: If low-density lipoprotein (LDL, or “bad cholesterol”) is 190mg/dL or higher, treatment with a statin medication is recommended. The goal is to lower the LDL cholesterol to 100 in the absence of heart disease, and down to 70 if you have heart disease. In summary: LDL over 190 is bad, less than 70 is good, and everything in the middle requires a little more thought.

In patients with clinical atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), the goal is to reduce LDL levels by  $\geq 50\%$  with high-intensity statin therapy, ideally down to 70. In people 40 to 75 years of age with diabetes who have an LDL of 70 or higher, a moderate-intensity statin is recommended. In people fifty or older, a high-intensity statin is considered reasonable, especially if other risk factors are present.

In very high-risk ASCVD, such as a history of multiple major ASCVD events, use of an additional medication on top of a statin to push LDL to less than 70 is advisable.

Risk calculations to decide whether to start statin therapy for those who do not meet any of the “automatic” criteria for starting a statin are discussed below. (mt)



### DOCTOR'S NOTE

#### **CALCULATING CARDIOVASCULAR RISK**

By Dr. Bartholomew

As we work to decrease a patient's risk for heart disease and stroke, our focus narrows in on the major medical factors that raise this risk. These major risk factors include: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes / elevated glucose levels, weight and inactivity status, smoking status, family history, sex, and age. Other risk factors for heart disease include premature menopause (before age 40), elevated triglycerides, and elevated high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (a marker of inflammation).

Do these sound familiar from the time you spend in the clinic? You hear us ask frequently about home blood pressure logs. We request our patients to perform health fair labs so that we can check on several of the items listed above: cholesterol, glucose, and sometimes C-reactive protein. We show great concern for our patients who smoke. We focus on modifiable risk factors. Of course, we can not do much about a patient's genetics, sex, and age!

But how exactly do all of these factors come together to determine a specific patient's risk? The American College of Cardiology created the Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease (ASCVD) risk calculator which helps determine the probability of heart disease and stroke based on age, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. The calculator provides a risk of problems in the next ten years as well as a lifetime risk.

You can learn more about the calculator [here](#).

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**BETTER ACCESS = BETTER CARE.**

**PRACTICE NEWS**



**FREE COVID TESTING SUPPLIES IN FLUX AT 307HEALTH**

307Health has been fortunate since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to be resourced with different COVID testing options and plentiful test supplies through a partnership with Park County Public Health and the Wyoming Department of Health. As part of this partnership, 307Health has offered free local testing by our medical team to its 1800+ members in appropriate circumstances as determined on a case-by-case review.

Recently, however, fluctuations in our rapid test inventory have been experienced with some indicators from the state health department that rapid test supplies may be tapering off due to test supply fluctuations across the nation. After dropping to a concerning low this month, our current test inventory did bump back up for the time being due to a recent expiration date extension by one of the test manufactures.

Each 307Health COVID test appointment is scheduled only after a case review by the physician with their patient by phone or text. Some reasons for testing include active COVID symptoms, a known recent exposure, upcoming surgery or travel, medical verification of active COVID infection for an employer and return to work clearance for an employer. These criteria may be more restricted should test supplies again become more limited. We recommend our members partner with us in this effort by taking advantage of the offer of 4 free at-home tests (see related article below). (kt)

**OUTDOOR COVID TESTING PROCEDURE**

All COVID testing at 307Health is done outdoors by one of our clinical team members. Unless otherwise instructed, patients with a test appointment are asked to drive up in the alley road to the clinic's south-end back door and then call or text their doctor who will then meet them at their vehicle to proceed with testing. (kt)



**MEMBER SERVICES FOCUS**

**WEBSITES OFFER FREE CoVID TESTS AND MORE**

Wyoming continues to make at-home saliva tests free and convenient through its partnership with VAULT. To learning more about this option through the Wyoming Department of Health, visit their website "COVID-19 At-Home Testing" [HERE](#).

A new website from the U.S. Federal Government is also now available through which U.S. households can order four free at-home rapid CoVID tests, learn more about mandatory insurance coverage of CoVID testing (8 at-home tests per month per covered person) and the locations of more than 20,000 free CoVID testing sites. Visit [COVIDTESTS.GOV](#) [HERE](#) to learn more and to order your 4 free tests. (kt)

**ADULT CHILDREN GET THEIR OWN ACCOUNT**

A change in bookkeeping and privacy polices has led to the decision to establish a billing account for 307Health members who are 18-years-old and older that is separate from the billing account of their parent(s). Parent sponsors who choose to continue paying for their adult child's 307Health member fees and medications may still do so by placing a confidential payment method on their sponsored family member's account.

Please contact us anytime to discuss your individual situation. (kt)

**JULY MARKS ADULT-RATE CONVERSION FOR 18-YEAR-OLDS**

Members turning 18-years-old who have one or more member parents and are receiving the discounted child rate will stay at their current rate until the July following their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, regardless of when they turn 18. At that time, their monthly fee will increase to the current adult rate for ages 18 – 45 and will be first invoiced at the new rate on August 1 (307Health bills its monthly member fees "in arrears"). As with all age-based fee changes, this change will be automatic – no special notice of the change will be sent in advance of the monthly invoice. (kt)

**COVID-19 NEWS AND RESOURCES**

**CoVID-19 TESTING OPTIONS IN PARK COUNTY**

**- A Review -**

By Dr. Billin, Public Health Officer  
Facebook "Pinned" Post

**Testing for patients with symptoms of COVID-19 who wish / need to be seen by a healthcare provider:**

1. [Cody Regional Hospital Emergency Department](#) - PCR, must be seen in ER, results during visit, \$
2. [Powell Valley Healthcare Emergency Department](#) - PCR, must be seen in ER, results during visit, \$
3. [Powell Valley Healthcare Respiratory Clinic](#) - PCR, appointment needed, \$
4. [Cody Regional Health Urgent Care Clinic](#) (Cathcart Building) - PCR, walk-in certain hours, results same day, \$
5. [Big Horn Basin Children's Clinic](#) - Antigen, by appointment for established patients, results same day, \$

**Testing for either asymptomatic patients or those who do not wish to be seen by a healthcare provider:**

1. [Walgreen's](#) - PCR, online appointment only, send out results, FREE
2. [Various Retailers](#) - Antigen, kit performed at home, immediate results, \$
3. [Wyoming Department of Health](#) - PCR, FREE (prepaid by the State of WY), official results emailed in 48-72 hours, employers can order multiple tests for employees, 2 year shelf life. Order a test so that you have it before you need it. More information at this website [HERE](#).
4. The [federal government](#) now offers free at-home COVID-19 antigen tests – Visit [HERE](#).