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# LIPID CLINIC NEWS

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## The Truth About Statins

It's been proven that statin drugs are able to very effectively lower LDL cholesterol levels in humans. Research has shown us that lowering LDL cholesterol levels, especially in individuals who are at high risk for heart disease, can significantly decrease their risk of coronary heart disease and stroke. Further, some research studies have shown a correlation of statin drugs with the prevention of cancer.

Some doctors and researchers have been questioning whether statin therapy is very effective for some populations, especially those who have diabetes, older individuals (greater than 75 years old), and those with no previous history of heart disease. Several studies have

seemed to prove that statin drugs are not good therapy for these individuals.

However, research studies are typically limited in their ability to prove these relationships by the size of their studies. A recent article in *Lancet* has put some of these questions to rest. A collaborative group called the Cholesterol Treatment Trialists' (CTT) compared the results of over 90,000 research subjects from over 14 clinical trials involving statins, and here is what they found:

### *Statins Are Very Effective*

After one year of statin drug therapy, participants were able to lower their LDL cholesterol an average of 40 mg/dl. This LDL cholesterol reduction was effective in lessening the incidence of heart attack, death by coronary heart disease, and stroke. These risks decreased further over the average 5-year period that study participants were taking the statin drugs.

### *Statins Work For Everyone*

When the subjects were broken into subgroups – gender, individuals with diabetes, older individuals, and those who had no history of heart disease – they found that the individuals in all of these populations also received benefit from statin drug therapy. Each of these subgroups saw similar decreases in heart attack, death by coronary heart disease and stroke.

### *Statins And Cancer*

There was no evidence that statin drug therapy, and the subsequent lowering of LDL cholesterol levels, had any positive or negative effects on incidence of cancer.

### *Bottom Line:*

This is great news! While most studies did not extend beyond 5 years, it is a safe assumption that statin drug therapy will be beneficial to individuals for as long as it is taken. More analysis is needed on the long-term effects of statin drugs, but we're very convinced on their benefits for reducing LDL cholesterol and ultimately prolonging our patients' lives.

*Lancet* 366:1267-1278, 2005.



## Research Highlights

### *More Reasons to Turn Off Your Television*

Common sense tells us that sitting around and watching TV can lead to unwanted pounds. But here is some research to confirm what we already know. Two recent studies, which were presented at a recent Obesity Society meeting, add to the growing body of evidence that our couch-potato lifestyle can lead to obesity in both adults and children.

One of the studies reported on the habits of members of the National Weight Control Registry. This is a group of close to 5,000 people who lost an average of 73 pounds and have kept off at least 30 pounds for more than six years. Their findings? Not surprisingly, most people in the registry watched fewer than 10 hours of television each week. This is much less than the national average of 28 hours per week. (If you do the math, this equals an alarming 4 hours of television viewing per day!) Registry members who increased their television viewing were more likely to gain weight.

In the other study presented at the meeting, researchers at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver asked 57 kids, ages 10 to 17, to wear pedometers for four days. They found that the children were only taking an average of 7,900 steps/day, which is considered low for kids. (Adults are advised to take 10,000 steps/day. While there are no set guidelines for kids, experts think they should be taking at least 11,000 to 13,000 steps/day.) One reason that the kids were taking so few steps: they were watching an alarming 2 ½ hours of television/day.

## The Use of Statins in Patients



## with a Recent Diagnosis of CHD and/or MI

It is known that after myocardial infarction, as with other severe illnesses, the plasma cholesterol declines. Only after six to eight weeks post-infarction will one have a stable situation to make a correct assessment as to how severe the cholesterol and LDL elevations actually are. Other patients with unstable angina or stable angina pectoris will not have decreased cholesterol levels. The use of statin drugs should be the same in coronary patients as in other patients. The safest and most prudent policy is to use a beginning dose of a statin rather than to try to overwhelm the situation by giving the highest dose initially. The dose can then be titrated upward depending upon the severity of plasma cholesterol and LDL elevation. This will help avoid the side effects of the statins, which are proportional to the amount of the statin administered. In all patients with coronary heart disease, the goal for LDL is below 70 mg/dl. This is usually attainable with a combination of lifestyle changes (diet, exercise) plus statins.

## Cookbook Review

### *Quick and Healthy Low-Fat, Carb Conscious Cooking, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*

Brenda Ponichtera, RD has published another award-winning cookbook filled with healthy, easy-to-prepare recipes. If you're a fan of her previous cookbook, *Quick & Healthy Recipes and Ideas*, then you'll also enjoy this revised edition. Don't let the title mislead you—this is not just another low-carb cookbook. This cookbook emphasizes the use of high fiber foods, such as whole grains, legumes, vegetables and fruits (in other words, healthier carbs).

Brenda's recipes are not gourmet dishes with hard-to-find ingredients. They're developed for busy families who don't have hours to spend in the kitchen. You will not only find familiar recipes such as *Chicken Enchiladas* and *Spaghetti and Meatballs*, you'll also find some updated recipes like *Turkey Lettuce Wraps* and *Grilled Salmon with Corn Salsa*. Members of our staff enjoyed the *Sweet Mustard Fish* and *Grilled Salmon with Coconut-Cilantro Sauce*.

For additional information, or to order your own copy, visit [www.QuickandHealthy.net](http://www.QuickandHealthy.net). You can also check your local bookstore or order directly from ScaleDown Publishing, Inc. 1519 Hermits Way, The Dalles, OR 97058. Books \$18.95, plus \$3.50 shipping for the first book and \$2.00 for each additional book.



## Product Review

### Pre-Cut Butternut Squash

Love butternut squash but hate the hassle of cutting it up? We've got the solution for you! We have found one-pound bags of pre-cut butternut squash at grocery stores such as Trader Joe's. All you do is roast, bake, steam or microwave, and add to your favorite recipe. If you don't know where to begin, we suggest you try our *Roasted Butternut Squash Enchiladas with Tomatillo Sauce* recipe in this issue. (Many of our staff members have made this recipe and all come back with rave reviews.) Happy cooking!

### Emerald Valley Organic Green Salsa

Here is another way to simplify the *Roasted Butternut Squash Enchiladas with Tomatillo Sauce* recipe in this issue – “Emerald Valley Organic Green Salsa”. The ingredient list looks almost identical to the Tomatillo Sauce portion of the butternut squash recipe.

Also great served over rice or other Mexican style dishes, or with your favorite baked tortilla chips. It can be found in most grocery stores. Just visit the website [www.emeraldvalleykitchen.com](http://www.emeraldvalleykitchen.com) for store location or for further information.



### Monterey Pasta Company Basil, Tomato and Mozzarella Whole Wheat Ravioli

Looking for a simple weeknight meal? Here it is! “Monterey Pasta Company Basil, Tomato and Mozzarella Whole Wheat Ravioli”, which can be found at Costco or your local grocery store. While the ravioli is cooking, sauté your choice of vegetables and herbs in a nonstick pan. The beauty of this dish is that you can use what's on hand in your refrigerator. Here is one of our favorites: sauté garlic, onions, basil, zucchini and tomatoes in a little nonstick cooking spray. Toss with cooked ravioli and add a sprinkle of grated Parmesan cheese for a delicious meal. Or, top with your favorite marinara sauce. This is a good way to introduce your family to whole-wheat pasta, if you haven't already done so -- even picky kids like these raviolis! A tasty dish the whole family will enjoy!

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## Roasted Butternut Squash Enchiladas with Tomatillo Sauce

*Another culinary creation by dietitian Stephanie! A great way to use pre-cut butternut squash from Trader Joe's.*

### Enchiladas

- 2 pounds butternut squash—about 4 cups cubed (either use 1 small squash peeled, seeded and cubed; 2 Trader Joe's bags of fresh squash; or frozen squash, thawed).
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ cup frozen corn, thawed
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon (or less) Lite Salt
- ¾ cup shredded low-fat pepper jack or Monterey Jack cheese (we like Cabot 50% light if you can find it)
- fat-free nonstick cooking spray
- 12 6-inch corn tortillas



### Tomatillo Sauce

- ½ pound tomatillos, peeled from their thin, paper-like wrappers and rinsed (hard, walnut-sized ones are best)
- 2/3 cup coarsely chopped cilantro
- 2/3 cup coarsely chopped green onion
- 2/3 cup fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 – 2 large coarsely chopped jalapeno pepper
- ½ teaspoon (or less) Lite Salt
- chili powder and/or black pepper (optional)
- ½ cup grated part-skim mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 400°. Spray a cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray; spread cubed squash in a single layer. Spray with nonstick cooking spray. Sprinkle with Lite Salt and black pepper. Toss to coat. Roast for 40 minutes, stirring once half way through cooking. Reduce oven to 350° to bake enchiladas.

While squash is roasting, prepare sauce. Boil tomatillos in a medium saucepan for 4 minutes. Add them to food processor or strong blender along with chicken broth, cilantro, green onion, Lite Salt and chopped jalapeno pepper. Process well. Taste the sauce, and add black pepper and/or chili powder, to desired level of spiciness. Sauce will be runny.

Sauté onion and garlic using nonstick cooking spray for 3 minutes until soft. Add the corn and cook 2 minutes more. Place corn mixture in a large bowl with roasted squash. Lightly mash with a potato masher, leaving some chunks.

Place 4 tortillas at a time between damp paper towels and microwave 30 - 60 seconds. Working quickly with a hot tortilla, place heaping ¼ cup of squash mixture down the center of tortilla and top with 1 tablespoon shredded pepper jack cheese. Roll and place in a sprayed 9-X-13 pan, seam side down. Repeat with remaining tortillas and filling.

Top enchiladas with all of the tomatillo sauce, covering edges of tortillas so they don't dry out. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Bake 20 minutes or until heated through. Try them garnished with fat-free sour cream and sliced black olives. Yum! Makes 6 servings (2 enchiladas each).

Calories 325      Sat. Fat 3 g      Cholesterol 90 mg      CSI 7  
Total Fat 12 g      Sodium 377 mg      Fiber 6 g

## Roasted Eggplant and Bell Pepper Spread

*Didn't we just put a roasted eggplant recipe in the last newsletter?! I guess we're in the mood for eggplant! This is a delicious appetizer that is simple to prepare and sure to get rave reviews.*

1 medium eggplant, peeled  
1 red bell pepper, seeded  
1 red onion, peeled  
2 cloves garlic, mashed  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon (or less) Lite Salt  
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon tomato paste

Preheat oven to 400°. Cut eggplant, bell pepper and onion into 1-inch cubes. Toss them in a large bowl with garlic, olive oil, Lite Salt and pepper. Spread on a nonstick baking sheet. Roast for 45 minutes until the vegetables are lightly browned and soft, tossing once during cooking. Cool slightly.

Place the vegetables in a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add the tomato paste and pulse 3 or 4 times to blend.

Serve alongside other Mediterranean specialties, such as pita bread, hummus, Greek olives, reduced-fat feta cheese and stuffed grape leaves.

Makes 2 cups (8 – 1/4 cup servings.)

~ Per ¼ cup ~

Calories 66	Saturated Fat < 1 g
Sodium 140 mg	Cholesterol 0 mg
Fiber 2 g	Cholesterol-Saturated Fat Index < 1 g
Total Fat 4 g	



