

Cholesterol-lowering drugs don't offset healthy choices, study finds

August 1 2007

Within the medical field, it is often assumed that patients view cholesterol-lowering medications (or statins) as a license to eat whatever they like -- they figure their medication has them covered, so a steak here and there won't hurt. However, a study published in the August issue of Mayo Clinic Proceedings finds that such patients don't tend to adopt unhealthy diets when prescribed statins.

Researchers also found that some patients were placed on cholesterol-lowering drugs before they'd made a good faith effort at improving their lifestyle to better their health. And some said they would have preferred starting with lifestyle alterations rather than medication.

Devin Mann, M.D., lead author of the article on statin use, says physicians should reconsider how they're treating patients who seek preventive care for cardiovascular disease, namely by giving up their long-held assumptions about them.

"Physicians aren't good at predicting patient behavior, so they should seek to form a partnership of trust with patients based on mutual respect and optimal communication," says Dr. Mann from Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

This study involved 71 patients who had been prescribed statins for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease. Patients were interviewed at the time of prescription and three and six months later, when no significant change in saturated fat intake was noted.

Source: Mayo Clinic

Citation: Cholesterol-lowering drugs don't offset healthy choices, study finds (2007, August 1)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-08-cholesterol-lowering-drugs-dont-offset-healthy.html>

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