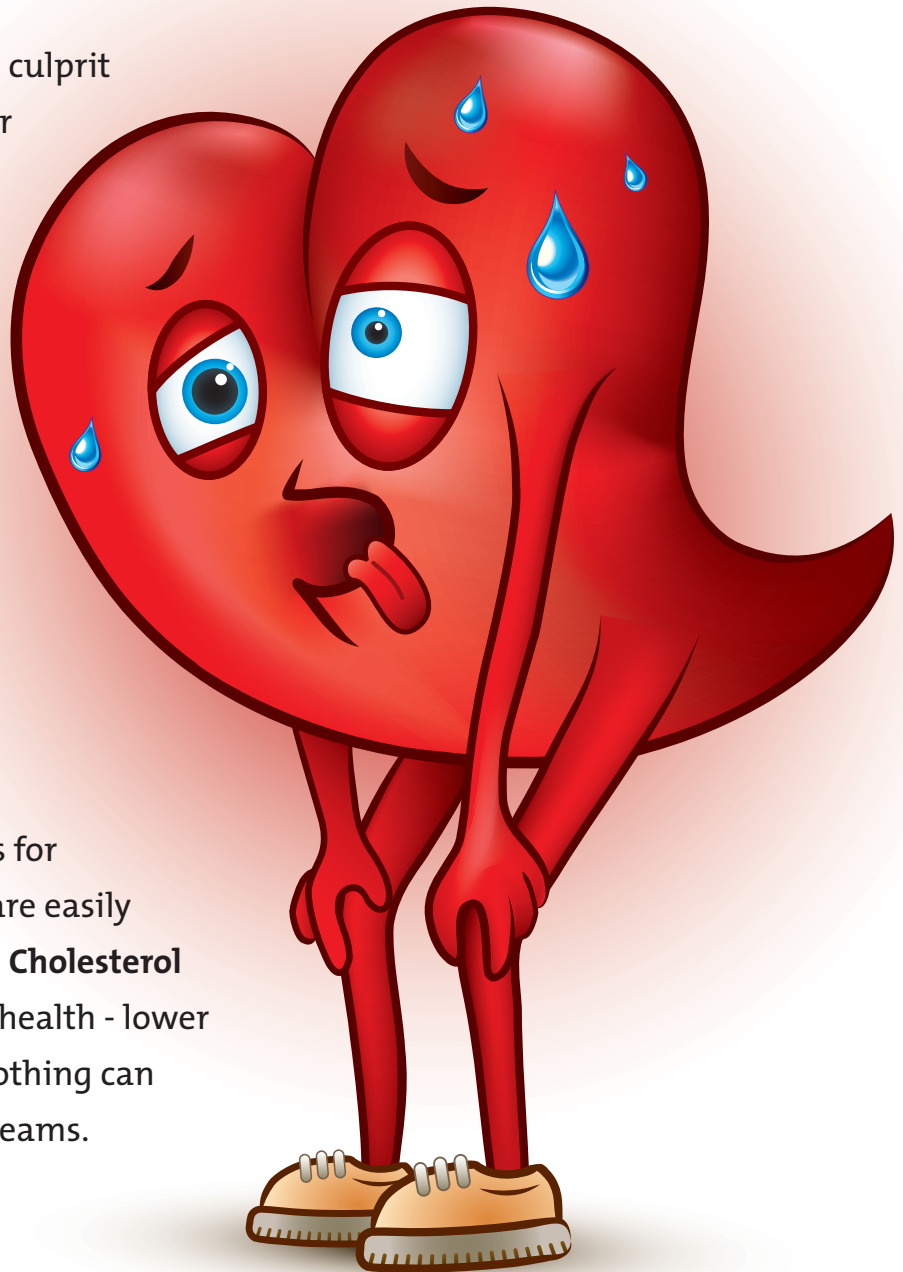


# Plaque Attack!

Did you know that arterial plaque is the culprit behind some of the worst cardiovascular conditions? *Coronary heart disease (CHD), coronary microvascular disease (MVD), carotid artery disease (CAD) and peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.)* all stem from the accumulation of hardened *low-density lipoprotein* in your circulatory system. According to the National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute, *CAD* is the leading cause of death in the U.S. for **BOTH** men and women, with more than half a million Americans dying from the disease each year. Thankfully, many of the risk factors for *CAD*, including plaque and cholesterol, are easily controllable. This September is **National Cholesterol Education Month**. Take a stand for your health - lower your risk for a *Plaque Attack* and then nothing can stop you from achieving your wildest dreams.



SAN ANTONIO  
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

*Spirit of*  
**Women**

*Plaque Attack* is powered by Spirit of Women®, a national network of hospitals and healthcare providers across the United States that ascribe to the highest standards of excellence in women's health, education, and community outreach.

**Stop *Plaque Attack* in its tracks. Get educated and learn simple ways to prevent arterial plaque from SILENTLY building up inside of you - it's not too late to turn things around!**

#### WHAT IS...

- ♥ **Coronary heart disease (CHD):** when plaque builds in the coronary arteries of the heart, blocking the oxygen supply and leading to *angina* (chest pain) or *heart attack*.
- ♥ **Coronary microvascular disease (MVD):** when plaque builds in the heart's smallest arteries, leading to heart disease.
- ♥ **Carotid artery disease (CAD):** when plaque builds in the arteries on the side of the neck, preventing oxygen from reaching the brain. Can lead to a stroke.
- ♥ **Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.):** when plaque builds in the major arteries of the legs, arms and pelvis. Can lead to numbness, pain and dangerous infections.

#### PLAQUE ATTACK 101: THE BASICS

- ♥ Plaque is composed of fat, calcium, cholesterol and other substances found in the blood. Plaque can build up in the arteries and when this occurs, the condition is called *atherosclerosis*.
- ♥ Plaque reduces the blood flow to your heart muscles and narrows the arteries.
- ♥ Plaque accumulates in your arteries and prevents oxygen from reaching the heart muscle.
- ♥ Plaque can also form cracks, causing blood cells called *platelets* to clump together and form blood clots at the site of the cracks, increasing chances of *angina* or *heart attack*.

Plaque has many risk factors, but one of the major risk factors is an unhealthy cholesterol level. Ideally, cholesterol levels should fall within these ranges:

- **Total cholesterol** = Less than 200 mg/DL
- **Low-density lipoprotein, (LDL or "bad" cholesterol)** = Less than 100 mg/DL
- **High-density lipoprotein, (HDL or "good" cholesterol)** = 60 mg/DL or higher
- **Triglycerides** = Less than 150 mg/DL

By not maintaining the right cholesterol levels, you're increasing the chances of a *Plaque Attack*. A nutritious diet, consistent physical activity, being at your healthiest weight and not smoking are what's needed to live free of worry over what could be going wrong in your arteries.

Don't distress if you find your cholesterol to be on the high side. Talk to your local Spirit of Women physician to help get your cholesterol back on track. There are many options to bring your cholesterol back to a "healthy" level and your Spirit of Women hospital will work with you to figure out what positive steps are both doable and agreeable for you.

Fortunately, arterial plaque can also be prevented effortlessly with the right daily choices. Dean Ornish, MD, Founder and President of the nonprofit Preventive Medicine Research Institute, has created a solution. His program, "The Ornish Spectrum", provides valuable information on how certain lifestyle decisions can make a big difference for your health. Eating right, exercising, dealing with stress, and support from family and friends all contribute to keeping you unstoppable. Dr. Ornish says it best: "When you feel better, these lifestyle changes are sustainable."

**For more information on "The Ornish Spectrum," visit: [www.pmri.org/spectrum/index.html](http://www.pmri.org/spectrum/index.html).**

There's no reason to allow plaque to sneak in and take control of your life. Sign on with your local Spirit of Women Hospital TODAY to defend yourself against *Plaque Attack* for good.

#### SOURCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute  
The Ornish Spectrum - [www.ornishspectrum.com/Program.aspx](http://www.ornishspectrum.com/Program.aspx)

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