

Heart TALK

Heart-healthy and Stroke-free Living with Dr. Amy L. Doneen, DNP, ARNP

Vol 52 September 2017

Thoughts from
Dr. Amy



TREATING INFLAMMATION

A New Era in Heart Attack & Stroke Prevention?

You've probably seen headlines hailing a new "wonder drug" as "the biggest medical breakthrough since statins" for treating heart disease. Gushing press reports also proclaimed that the drug, canakinumab, cuts risk for heart attacks, strokes, and cancer with a "revolutionary" approach — targeting inflammation, not cholesterol — according to clinical trial results released at a medical meeting on August 28.

What's missing from the hype about "a new era" in treating cardiovascular disease (CVD) — the leading killer of Americans — is that there's nothing "new" about targeting chronic inflammation. In fact, the BaleDoneen Method has been doing that exactly that for more than a decade as a crucial part of our science-based heart-attack-and-stroke prevention plan! Here's a closer look at the study and key facts about arterial inflammation, which we call "fire."

Who did this study and what did they find out?

The CANTOS clinical trial, sponsored by the drug company Novartis, was designed to find out if reducing inflammation in heart attack survivors lowers their risk for repeat CV events. Researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital randomly assigned 10,061 patients, all of whom had high levels of inflammation, to either receive canakinumab (given in either 50, 150, or 300 mg doses) or a placebo. All patients also received standard care, including cholesterol-lowering statins.

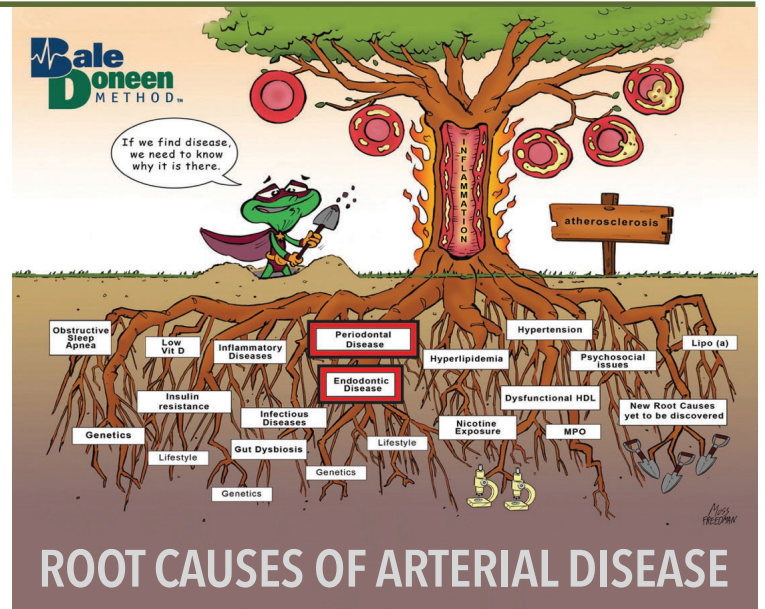
The team tracked the patients' health for four years and reported a 15% drop in risk for CV events — including fatal or non-fatal heart attacks and strokes — in those who received 150 or 300 mg doses of canakinumab and a more than 30% drop in the need for bypass surgery or angioplasty to re-open blocked arteries. This group also had lower rates of cancer

deaths, but slightly higher risk for fatal infections. The findings are considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

What's the link between inflammation and heart attacks?

In 2012, two landmark studies published in *Lancet* were the first to show that chronic inflammation actually causes CVD. This fiery process is also at the root of many other debilitating or life-threatening conditions, including diabetes and cancer. In fact, it is more dangerous to your arteries than having high cholesterol!

As discussed more fully in the BaleDoneen book, *Beat the Heart Attack Gene*, heart attacks and strokes are triggered when a diseased artery becomes so inflamed that it can no longer contain the plaque smoldering inside. Like a volcano spewing molten lava, inflammation causes a breach in the artery wall, leading to the formation



of a clot that blocks blood flow.

Our method uses inexpensive blood and urine tests to check for this fiery process, which is most common in people who are overweight, particularly if they are also physically inactive and/or smoke. Talk to your healthcare provider about inflammation testing, even if your cholesterol levels are normal. In one large study of people hospitalized for a heart attack, the majority had "normal" cholesterol and many had "optimal" levels under U.S. national guidelines.

Is canakinumab currently available for heart-disease patients?

Canakinumab, sold under the trade name Ilaris with a list price of about \$200,000 a year, is currently FDA approved for treatment of a few rare conditions, but NOT for heart disease. It's a monoclonal antibody — a type of drug that acts like a smart bomb — that targets an inflammatory substance called

interleukin-1 beta (IL-1B).

As discussed more fully in the BaleDoneen book, *Beat the Heart Attack Gene*, some people carry IL-1A or IL-1B genes that heighten their response to inflammation, greatly raising their risk for CVD. In fact, their lifetime risk equals that of a smoker! A saliva test is available for check for these genes, which also quadruple risk for periodontal (gum) disease, making it particularly crucial for IL-1 gene carriers to get optimal dental care.

There are also several other genetic tests your healthcare provider can use as part of a comprehensive BaleDoneen assessment of your heart health. And if any of them show that you may be at increased risk for a heart attack or stroke, the potentially lifesaving news is that our method has proven strategies, including easy, heart-smart lifestyle steps, to prevent these events — without turning to a \$200,000 drug!



Follow the HASPC on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for the latest news on heart health and wellness.



Heart Attack & Stroke Prevention Center

507 S. Washington, Suite 170
Spokane, Washington 99204

(509) 747-8000

www.TheHASPC.com



REDUCING INFLAMMATION

4 Easy, Natural Ways to "Fireproof" Your Arteries

In breaking news, scientists report an anti-inflammation drug can reduce risk for heart attacks, strokes and death from cardiovascular causes, without targeting cholesterol. However, that drug, canakinumab, costs a whopping \$200,000 a year!

The wonderful news is that you don't need a high priced drug to fight inflammation. As discussed more fully in the BaleDoneen book, Beat the Heart Attack Gene, our heart-attack-and-stroke-prevention plan prescribes optimal lifestyle as the most powerful "medicine" against chronic inflammation. Here are four proven ways to "fireproof" your arteries — naturally.



PRACTICE MINDFULNESS DAILY

Chronic stress, which repeatedly activates the body's fight-or-flight system, has long been linked to increased risk for heart attacks and strokes. A [new study](#) published in Lancet used PET imaging to show that when the brain's amygdala is over-activated by stress or anxiety, bone marrow produces more white-blood cells, leading to arterial inflammation, which in turn magnifies heart attack and stroke risk. Mindful meditation, however, appears to have the opposite effect, the researchers reported. Not only can it boost heart health, but mindfulness has also been shown to improve sleep onset and efficacy.

BaleDoneen recommendation

Devote 10 minutes a day to mindful meditation. Sit in a relaxed position, close your eyes and focus on your breathing and the present moment as you let stressful or upsetting thoughts float away. Prayer is another great way to soothe the mind and spirit, enhancing cardiovascular wellness.

STEP UP PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Why does regular exercise greatly reduce heart attack and stroke risk? While you might guess that physical activity keeps the heart healthy by lowering cholesterol, blood pressure and body weight — all of which help protect against cardiovascular (CV) events—the well-known Women's Health Study found that the no. 1 CV benefit of regular exercise is reducing inflammation.

BaleDoneen recommendation

Aim for at least 22 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, jogging, or biking, daily. Check with your healthcare provider before starting a new fitness regimen to make sure it's right for you.

EAT THE RAINBOW

Consuming a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables has amazing cardiovascular benefits, including lower risk for heart attack, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure and several forms of cancer. What's more, people who eat a diet that is high in fiber (found in most produce) are nearly 60% less likely to die from CV causes, according to a study of nearly 400,000 people ages 50 and older.

BaleDoneen recommendation

Stock up on leafy green veggies, tomatoes, citrus fruit, fresh berries and cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli, cabbage and Brussels sprouts), all of which have been shown in studies to boost heart health.

GET OPTIMAL DENTAL CARE

A landmark BaleDoneen study is the first to show that oral bacteria from periodontal disease (PD) can actually cause cardiovascular disease (CVD), the leading killer of Americans. The majority of U.S. adults over age 30 have PD — and millions of them don't know it because they haven't been checked for gum disease, a serious infection that can lead to tooth loss and heart problems, if untreated.

BaleDoneen recommendation

Your dental provider is a potentially lifesaving member of your heart-attack-and-stroke-prevention team. To find out if you have PD, ask to have your gums examined for signs of oral infection. Also discuss the best ways to take care of your teeth and gums: Studies show that excellent oral health, including daily brushing and flossing and regular dental care, can add years to your life, giving you a lot to smile about!

September Recipe

Curry-Orange Rub Grilled Salmon



Ready in just 25 minutes, this easy recipe is packed with flavor, using a simple, but savory rub with just three ingredients. Turmeric, the spice that gives curry its yellow hue, is sometimes called "the golden spice of life," due to its rich array of health benefits. Its active ingredient, curcumin, has powerful anti-inflammatory effects that have been shown to help protect against heart attacks and several types of cancer. What's more, in a recent study, curcumin also showed promise as a mood-booster for people with depression.

Delight your family or friends by serving this savory salmon dish with steamed or grilled vegetables or your favorite salad. For a salad that pairs well with this recipe, try topping arugula, spinach leaves, or baby lettuce with sliced orange (peel and seeds removed), black olives, and fresh thyme, then drizzling with vinaigrette dressing.

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ pound salmon fillets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1¼ teaspoons salt (optional)
- 4 tablespoons orange peel
- 4 tablespoons curry powder
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

Preheat grill to medium heat. Pat salmon filets dry, brush with oil and season with salt (if using). Combine orange peel, curry powder and pepper. Coat fillets with spice rub. Lightly oil grill grate and place fillets on preheated grill. Cook 6 to 8 minutes per side, or until fish flakes easily with a fork, then enjoy!

Serves six

Adapted from [Goodhousekeeping.com](#) and [Allrecipes.com](#)