

Diet and Coronary Heart Disease

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The essential evidence today that diet plays a role in CHD is three fold: through extensive worldwide epidemiological evidence, limited human experimentation and animal experimentation to support or verify epidemiological and human experimental findings.

The consensus of opinion is that the major determinants are: energy balance between intake and calorie expenditure, quality and quantity of dietary fat, its degree of saturation and cholesterol content. The effect of the diet in raising cholesterol rich beta lipoprotein (low density Lipoprotein) levels appear to be important. In animal experiments it is virtually impossible to achieve atherosclerosis unless the beta-lipoprotein levels are elevated.

Coronary heart disease is the chief cause of death in both the American and Sri Lankan male adult. The American diet is high, in fat calories (35 to 47%), saturated fat and cholesterol from animal meats, egg, cheese, and milk. The Sri Lankan high saturated fat (from coconut) diet will be discussed in relation to other dietary factors such as the amount and type of proteins, carbohydrates and fibre in the differing life styles of our urban and rural low middle and upper income groups.