



Knowing cholesterol numbers part of healthy aging



In our lives today, our world has many numbers. Can you remember all of them? What are the most important numbers that you should remember? Is it your brother's or daughter's telephone number.....oh yes, does that mean the land line or the cell phone or both? Is it your social security number, or how much you have in your checking and savings account?

The many numbers that we have to remember are quite overwhelming! Although these numbers are important, perhaps the numbers that can affect your health are the most significant. You may ask yourself "what numbers do I need to know to protect my health?" Can you answer the following questions?

1. What is your systolic (top) blood pressure number? Did you know that if your systolic blood pressure is high, there is a possibility that you could suffer a heart attack, stroke, memory loss, kidney failure, and/or congestive heart failure?

2. What was your last blood sugar (glucose) reading? High blood sugar increases your risk for heart disease/stroke, kidney disease, blindness, nervous system disorders, and/or dental disease.

3. What was your last LDL (low-density lipoproteins) cholesterol reading? High LDL places you at increased risk for heart disease and stroke.

If you know your numbers to all of the above questions that is Wonderful! If you do not know your numbers to the above questions, Take Action Now! What action can you take?

First, contact your doctor's office and obtain your blood test results from your last visit. Ask questions to try to understand what those numbers mean. Second, consider learning more about the "10 Keys to Healthy Aging" Program offered in your community and take ownership of your health.

The "10 Key" Program is an innovative course for people 50 years of age and older offered by the University of Pittsburgh's, Center for Healthy Aging. This program promotes healthy living within families and/or the community. For more information, call 866-350-6509 or log on to our Web site at www.healthyaging.pitt.edu.

The free certificate program is open to individuals who want to help promote and support healthy living. One aspect of practicing the "10 Keys to Healthy Aging" is to know your numbers and take the necessary actions to maintain the "10 Key" goal. The program is offered at the following locations every spring, summer and fall:

Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) Boyce — Mondays from 1 to 3 p.m. Feb. 11 through March 3

North Hills — Fridays from 9-11 a.m. Feb. 15 through March 28 (no class March 21)

North Hills — Fridays from 6-8 p.m. Feb. 15 through March 28 (no class March 21)

South — Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m. March 5 through April 9

UPMC McKeesport (Kelly Building) — Mondays from 9-11 a.m. Feb. 11 through March 3

Bethel Public Library, spring — Call the Center for Healthy Aging

Oakland, Pittsburgh, spring — Call the Center for Healthy Aging

Vintage Community Center, Pittsburgh, spring — Call the Center for Healthy Aging

Classes meet once a week for six weeks for two hours each session. Class size is limited to 20 students, who will receive the resource guide, "The 10 Keys to Healthy Aging." Two "Keys" are presented during each class.

The Community Ambassador Program can be offered at other locations.

Please call 866-350-6509 to learn more and to register.

Over 300 individuals have participated in the "10 Keys to Healthy Aging" program, with 201 individuals obtaining their Community Health Ambassador Certification. Certified Health Ambassadors typically share the information with their family members, friends, neighbors, and/or community groups. In one year, the Health Ambassadors have shared the "10 Key" message with over 1,500 people. This public health campaign has grown quite considerably since 2001, when the program began.

Remember, prevention is key. Know your numbers and take action today. Learn about the "10 Keys to Healthy Aging." Take charge of your health. Make way for a "HEALTHIER TOMORROW" for you, your family and your community.

10 Keys to Healthy Aging

- Key 1 — Control Systolic (Top) Blood Pressure (optimal is less than 120 mmHg; high blood pressure is 140 mmHg or greater)
- Key 2 — Stop Smoking
- Key 3 — Preventative cancer screening
- Key 4 — Regular immunization
- Key 5 — Control blood glucose (normal range is 70 to 100 mg/dl)
- Key 6 — LDL cholesterol (less than 100 mg/dl)
- Key 7 — Maintain physical activity (more than two hours a week)
- Key 8 — Maintain strong bones and prevent muscle weakness
- Key 9 — Socialize at least once a week
- Key 10 — Treat depression

This column was written by Kathy Williams, MHA, RN, Ambassador Education Director and Nurse Coordinator of the Center for Healthy Aging. For more information on this article, please call 412-383-1312.

CHA is a part of the Department of Epidemiology in the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh. It is one of 33 Prevention Research Centers in the United States funded by the Centers for Disease

Control. For questions or more information contact David J. Fetterman, Community Outreach Coordinator at the Center for Healthy Aging at 412-383-3121 or visit www.healthyaging.pitt.edu.