

[IMAGE]

## **Eligibility for Cholesterol Drugs Skyrockets Under New Guidelines**

The National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) reports provide recommendations for the management of LDL ("bad") cholesterol using cholesterol-lowering drugs in patients at higher risk for heart disease. The report guidelines consider factors such as cholesterol levels, age, family history, high blood pressure, and presence of diabetes. The third and most recent report by the program redefines guidelines for eligibility for cholesterol drugs based on "bad" cholesterol levels and other factors.

A study in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* determined the possible impact of the revised recommendations on Americans, using a sample of almost 14,000 people. These individuals, who all had some cardiovascular risk factors, were assessed for eligibility for cholesterol drugs under the previous program guidelines, as well as the new guidelines. The revised guidelines suggest that people with much lower LDL cholesterol levels can receive drug treatments.

Under the new guidelines, almost two-and-a-half times as many Americans are eligible for drug treatment for high cholesterol and heart-disease risk. Approximately 15 million individuals were eligible for cholesterol drugs under the previous guidelines, but 36 million will now be eligible. The estimated increases in eligibility by category include a 200% increase for all those under age 45 and a 150% increase among men.

The long-term side effects of cholesterol drugs are largely unknown, especially in younger patients. If you have high cholesterol, talk to your doctor of chiropractic about conservative treatment approaches instead of taking drugs, especially if you are younger and have only marginally high cholesterol.

### *Reference:*

Fedder DO, Koro CE, L'Italien GJ. New National Cholesterol Education Program III Guidelines for primary prevention lipid-lowering drug therapy: Projected impact on the size, sex, and age distribution of the treatment-eligible population. *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* 2002;105, pp. 152-156.

For information on the dangers of drugs, go to

<http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/general/drugs/index.html>.

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