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Cholesterol has 'good' side, too

United Press International
KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Despite a proven link between high levels of cholesterol and coronary heart disease, and despite the waxy substance's bad public image, not all cholesterol is bad, doctors at a new clinic say.

"The peculiar thing is: there is so-called 'good' cholesterol," said Dr. Hubert Bell, senior investigator at the Lipid Clinic. "Yet the general public thinks of cholesterol as bad."

According to a study released by the federal government this year, heart disease is directly linked to the level of cholesterol in the blood, and lowering cholesterol levels markedly reduces the incidence of fatal heart attacks.

The study, consisting of 10 years of research costing \$150 million, was considered the most expensive and broadest research project in medical history.

At the Lipid Clinic, established in February, a handful of doctors and small staff recently began treating patients and further defining the role of "good" cholesterol, known as HDL, or high-density lipoprotein and bad kind, LDL, or low-density lipoprotein.

"HDL works as a scavenger and

cleans out deposits in arteries," Bell said.

Bell and his staff believe HDL-LDL ratio levels affect the development — or non-development — of coronary artery disease but, more specifically, that increasing levels of HDL can slow the progression of the disease and may even prevent it.

"HDL is a key to whether people will or will not develop heart disease," Bell said. "We're trying to prove that with our clinical studies, and furthermore, we're trying to alter it."

Bell and his staff are quick to point out that their clinic's emphasis is not on research but on the actual adjustment of the patient's cholesterol levels.

"We try to increase HDLs. That's what makes us unique from other clinics in the nation," he said.

"We take the average, everyday American with risk factors (for heart disease)," said Bell, a cardiologist at the Mid-America Heart Institute of St. Luke's Hospital. "We take patients who are overweight, on birth control pills, diabetic ... and sedentary people."

"We try to work with their lifestyle, not change it completely."

Laughing gas no laughing matter

United Press International

NEW YORK — The aerosol propellant in cylinders of whipped cream is nitrous oxide. When injected into a fuel mixture, the same stuff works as a power booster for motorcycles and hot rods.

Combined with oxygen, it is used for anesthesia during short dental surgical procedures and is known as laughing gas.

In all of the above cases, use of the colorless gas usually is harmless and even good. That even goes for use by hot rodders and motorcyclists, provided speed limits aren't broken or lives put on the line.

But inhaling nitrous oxide, as some do, to induce a brief high is a potentially lethal practice, doctors from the Department of Family Medicine at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond said in a report.

"An immature, impulsive, risk-taking, pleasure-seeking individual who inhales nitrous oxide in solitude is especially at risk for developing hypoxic cerebral insult (brain injury)," Drs. Richard H. Schwartz and Martha Calihan report in "American Family Physician."

The doctors told of a 22-year-old user admitted to a Richmond community hospital "thrashing about and in a comatose state."

"He had been a habitual daily user of nitrous oxide for the past 2 1/2 months," they said.

Found unconscious with his head enclosed in a plastic bag, the man was admitted to the intensive care unit and given oxygen.

"On the second hospital day, he awoke and was coherent, but seemed to have defects in recent memory," the Virginia doctors said in the report.

Aggie Christmas Fair today only in Rudder

Aggies can avoid the Christmas rush and buy their gifts before finals by shopping on campus.

MSC Hospitality is sponsoring an Aggie Christmas Fair in Rudder Exhibit Hall from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today.

Bryan-College Station merchants will set up tables to show their merchandise. All items will be under \$30, in order to meet the students' budgets, Carrie Gladwell, Hospitality special events chairman, said.

"The purpose of the fair is to bring in local merchants so that the

students and faculty can do Christmas shopping at a convenient location," Gladwell said.

Gladwell said the fair is a service to the students.

"It's a good way to shop before finals while bringing together the merchants in the community," she said.

Some groups who will have tables will include MSC Opas, the Class of '85, Sweet Memories, Pat's Paintings, Evergreen Imports, Containers and More, and other craft, specialty and book stores.

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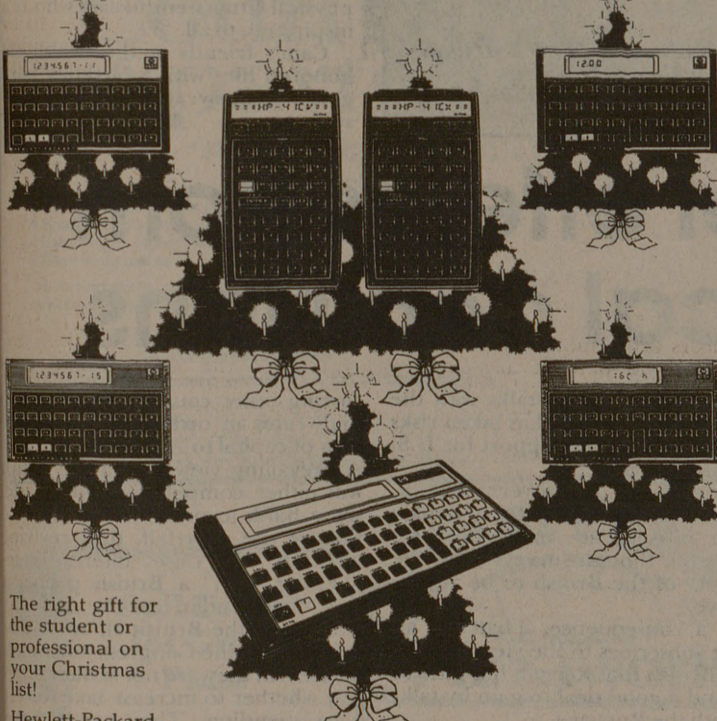
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