

## What Is Your Cholesterol?



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*Guest Editorial For  
Finger Lakes Community  
Health Magazine  
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For the last 20 years, studies have consistently shown a relationship between

cholesterol values and cardiovascular disease. Given these findings, cholesterol screening for adults has become an important part of a routine physical exam, and most patients are very interested in their values.

### *What is cholesterol and what are the components?*

Cholesterol is an important component of the cell wall and therefore every cell contains cholesterol. Most cholesterol is made in the liver and some is absorbed in the intestinal tract.

The cholesterol value is made up of three components which confer different risks to patients.

LDL is the “bad cholesterol” in that it is deposited in the lining of blood vessels and causes inflammation and plaque deposits. These deposits can obstruct blood flow and cause heart attacks, strokes or leg pain. HDL is the “good cholesterol” and is protective against vascular events. The third component is triglycerides which also

promote plaque buildup in the vessel wall. It is important that the values are measured by a reputable lab which accurately measures all the components of the cholesterol level.

### *What are ideal values?*

Cholesterol goals are dependent upon the patient’s history and risk of developing vascular disease. For patients who have had vascular events the LDL goal is < 70 mg/dl, and the triglyceride goal is <150. The HDL goal is >35 but the higher the better. For those who have never had disease, the goals are dependent upon the risk assessment of the patient known as the Framingham risk score. For those at high risk, the LDL should be <130 and for those with a low risk it should be <160. Be aware that these values are based upon imperfect data and are likely to change in the future.

### *What should I do if my values are high?*

Diet, exercise and weight control are very important in the management of cholesterol. Sometimes

dramatic changes can occur with weight loss and dietary discretion. In some cases the values remain high despite attempts at weight and diet control. Many patients are prescribed cholesterol lowering drugs called statins. Statins effectively lower the LDL values. Other drugs are used to manage the HDL and/or triglyceride values.

### *Are statins dangerous?*

Statins are very safe medicines. The two side effects to be aware of are liver inflammation and muscle achiness. Rarely, a serious muscle injury can occur which can affect the kidneys. The prescribing physician should monitor the liver tests and assess for muscle inflammation. In most cases the values are measured every 6 months. The side effects are almost always reversible when the medication is stopped or the dosage is reduced. In most randomized trials, the risk of muscle and liver toxicity was nearly the same as the group of patients receiving the placebo (no active drug).

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## FLMA Offers Advanced Bone Density Testing

Patients needing a bone mineral density exam now have a new option. We have installed a GE Lunar Prodigy bone densitometer in our Testing Center in the Geneva Office Park. The new bone densitometer (also known as a DEXA scan) provides the image quality, accuracy, and precision required for the earlier detection of osteoporosis. Once thought to be

a normal part of aging, it is now known that osteoporosis can be slowed and fractures avoided with early detection and treatment.

The DEXA scan is a quick, safe, painless, and non-invasive test. The patient lies comfortably on a padded exam table while a small, arm-like device passes over recording images of the hips and spine. A

complete, detailed report is then provided to the patient’s physician for review. This information helps the physician assess the patient’s risk for fracture and is effective in monitoring the treatment and progress of disease. Patients questioning the need for a bone mineral density exam should consult their primary care physician or gynecologist. ☺



*Radiologic technologist Eric Hartfield helps patient Midge Kerlan get into proper position on the DEXA scan examination table.*

## Over 45 years of caring for patients in the central Finger Lakes community

The origins of Finger Lakes Medical Associates go back to **the 1960s and '70s:**

Our *Internal Medicine and Ob/Gyn* Departments had their beginnings in the early '60s when four physicians formed Geneva Medical Associates located at 324 W. North Street in Geneva. These founding physicians, William Dean (IM), William Achilles (Ob/Gyn), Verne Marshall (surgery), and Alvin Brown (IM) recognized the benefit of independent physicians working and practicing together. Through

the years, Ob/Gyn flourished; Internal Medicine expanded incorporating *Nephrology* and, with the addition of Paul Bleakley, MD, *Cardiology*.

Our *Pediatric* Department had its start when Jane McCaffrey, MD, opened her practice in the Mason Street Building **in 1973**. With the arrival of Dr. James Robbins **in 1978**, Geneva Pediatric Associates was born and started to grow to its current complement of six pediatricians.

**In 1996**, Geneva Medical Associates and Geneva

Pediatric Associates merged to become Geneva Medical Group, later renamed Finger Lakes Medical Associates to reflect the practice's wider service area.

**In 1998**, cardiologist David Conrey merged his practice with FLMA thus creating a discrete Cardiology Department. *Urology* started in 2003 when Dr. Rich Kasulke came on board.

**In 1999**, all of our Geneva offices moved into our current location at 200 North Street. This move provided patients with a single medical

record, greater continuity of care, and the convenience of a one-stop medical home. Physicians acquired easy access to their colleagues for patient consultation and closer proximity to their hospitalized patients.

Today, Finger Lakes Medical Associates is comprised of 17 physicians, over 115 staff, four locations, and six specialties. We remain an independent, physician owned and run organization, dedicated to the health of our patients in the central Finger Lakes. ☉

## Pediatric Department Participates In Asthma Study

The Monroe Plan for Medical Care has selected FLMA's Pediatric Department to participate in its Pediatric Asthma Care Enhancement (PACE) Project. The goal of the project is to improve the quality of care for children with asthma. As participants in the PACE Project, FLMA's Pediatric Department will perform audits of the asthma care given to its Monroe Plan patients every

six months for three years and will receive feedback on how the practice performs compared to its peers. In addition, physicians, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses will undergo a five-hour training program to enhance their skills in providing education to all children with asthma and their caregivers.

Currently, FLMA's Pediatric Department has over 200 children enrolled



in the Monroe Plan. The Monroe Plan delivers government-funded patient services through the Blue Choice Option, Family Health Plus, and Child Health Plus programs. To find out if you or your child is eligible for one of these health insurance plans, call 1-800-346-2211. ☉

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Multiple studies have shown a reduction in the risk of heart attack, stroke, and the need for cardiovascular procedures on these drugs and therefore in almost all cases the slight risk is more than made up for by the significant benefits. ☉

### Who is FLMA?

Finger Lake Medical Associates (FLMA) is a private, physician-owned, group medical practice. The fifteen physician partners of FLMA are the owners of the organization. They are: Doctors Steve Achilles, Kathrin Berg, Danielle Clair,

Mike Collins, Bev Ellington, Art Equinozzi, Jim Hight, Rich Kasulke, Jane McCaffrey, Ned Nicolai, Bill Platzer, Jim Robbins, Mark Ryan, Marc Sadovnic, and Bob Weinberg. FLMA has a staff of over 115 with offices in Geneva, Penn Yan, and Newark. Patients are seen in the following specialties: cardiology, internal medicine (adult medicine), nephrology, ob/gyn, pediatrics, and urology.

### To reach FLMA

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- Cardiology (315) 787-5222
- Internal Medicine (315) 787-5155
- Nephrology (315) 787-5155
- Ob/Gyn (315) 787-5111
- Pediatrics (315) 787-5200
- Urology (315) 787-5155
- Business Office (315) 787-5100

**Testing Center**  
821 Pre-Emption Road  
Suite 202  
Geneva, NY 14456  
(315) 781-2061

**Penn Yan Office**  
418 North Main Street  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
(315) 536-3362

**Newark Office**  
513 West Union Street  
Route 31  
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