Does Saturated Fat Raise Cholesterol and Cause Heart Disease? The Dietary Guidelines Debate Transcript

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Why Saturated Fat Is Controversial

So now, why is saturated fat so controversial? People are really upset about this. So I scoured the research and of course I found conflicting studies.

Conflicting Research on Heart Disease Risk

So for example, there was a large meta-analysis published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition and they found that dietary saturated fat intake was not associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease or overall cardiovascular disease.

They studied 350,000 adults for 23 years and really didn't find significant differences in those who ate the fat and those who didn't. There are others who say the health effects of the saturated fat depend on the food source.

Food Source and Trans Fat Concerns

Where is it coming from? Is it coming from trans fats? And I don't think any of these guidelines addressed trans fats. Now another very popular advocate for plant-based eating, Dr.

Michael Greger, who also has a documentary coming out on how plant-based eating can reverse cardiovascular disease.

Plant-Based Advocacy and LDL Debate

So it's no surprise that he opposes this recommendation. So he argues that saturated fat does directly contribute to cardiovascular disease by raising your bad cholesterol, that LDL.

So he feels that this is really a modifiable risk factor and that people should not be eating more meat. and the opposite is true. There's some evidence that some people will experience higher cholesterol when they eat fat and then some people won't.

Cholesterol, Inflammation, and Individual Response

So now the question is, when your cholesterol goes up is that what is causing the heart disease. And there's debate on that as well. There are some that feel that it's not the number itself that is causing the disease, but it's inflammation.

So again, I think it depends on where the fat is sourced from and how the body responds to it.