

TRANSCRIPT OF MEDIA CLIPS-OSF cardiologist: New cholesterol guidelines could save lives

Dr. Jason Trager, cardiologist OSF HealthCare

Dr. Trager says clinical studies show the benefits of lowering cholesterol levels for everyone.

"Lower is better as far as your bad cholesterol level, and it means that a lot of patients who were not taking cholesterol medicines should now be on cholesterol medicines. But the cost-benefit analysis is definitely there. Fortunately with these new medications, people are living longer." (:15)

Dr. Trager says advances in cholesterol-lowering drugs, including combination therapies and injectable medications, have made cholesterol goals more achievable.

"In the past, we were not able to get to these targets without very high doses of medications. So now with some of these newer medications, we can get that. We can get these goals, and that really helps reduce future risk of heart attack and strokes, especially for somebody who already had an event." (:24)

Side effects from medicines can force some people to just stop taking medication but Dr. Trager tries to help people understand by using an analogy.

"You're going to replace that tire on your car or you're going to wait until the big blow out ... well, most people would rather replace the tire instead of getting into that big accident," he explains. "It's the same analogy. Where your heart is concerned, being proactive and being your own advocate can really reduce future heart attack and risk." (:22)

Dr. Trager points out lifestyle changes alone are no longer enough to meet today's lower cholesterol targets.

"Somebody's not going to be able to reach those goals with diet and exercise unfortunately," Dr. Trager shares. "You can go on a straight vegan-type diet and cut out the red meat. You can get the cholesterol level down, but you're not going to reach those exact goals." (:21)