

BROADCAST- OSF cardiologist: New cholesterol guidelines could save lives

ANCHOR LEAD-IN:

The American Heart Association and other leading health groups are calling for earlier and more aggressive cholesterol treatment, with new guidelines lowering targets for “bad” LDL cholesterol to help prevent heart attacks and strokes.

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Doctors say the new guidelines could mean more people starting medication sooner. Cardiologist Jason Trager with OSF HealthCare recommends those at risk begin managing cholesterol as early as age 30.

Under the updated guidelines, the highest-risk patients should aim for LDL levels below 55, while others are encouraged to stay under 70 or 100 depending on their risk.

Studies show nearly three-quarters of high-risk patients are still above recommended levels.

SOT-DR. JASON TRAGER

“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 a new generation of drugs are making it easier to reach those lower targets and could significantly reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.