



Diabetes

& Dentistry & YOU

Facts About C-Reactive Protein

A Common Link to Diabetes, Heart Disease, Gum Disease?

You may have heard of CRP (also known as C-Reactive Protein). But chances are you're not sure of what it is or how it is linked to everything from heart disease to diabetes and gum disease. But it's important for you to know, especially if you are over 40 and/or living with diabetes.

What it is

CRP is a protein present in your blood plasma. Under normal, healthy circumstances, CRP wouldn't even register in a blood test. But when inflammation (caused by infection) is present anywhere in the body CRP levels rise rapidly. Both physicians and dentists use CRP as a "marker" or indicator for inflammation-related diseases. Which means, when your doctor or *DentistryForDiabetics* dentist* sees high levels of C-Reactive Protein in your blood test – your risk of heart disease, thickening of the arterial walls, and periodontal disease more than doubles.

And if you are diabetic or pre-diabetic, the risk is even higher for

For patients at risk of heart disease, CRP levels can provide medical professionals a better diagnostic view of their condition that may lead to more intensive treatment.

The key is to be aware of your risk of cardiovascular disease.

those complications – especially if your blood sugar is not controlled.

All of which may sound frightening. But it doesn't have to be because there are two things you can do right away that will improve your lot very quickly (in no particular order).

The first is to find out if you need a CRP test at all. According to the American Heart Association and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CRP tests

should be administered to "at-risk" patients only. Your doctor and also your dentist can determine whether you fall into that category.

Both will consider:

whether you have a history of heart disease

if you are diabetic and are having trouble managing blood glucose

if you have chronic periodontal disease

and more. . . .

If you see your physician first and he or she believes you fall within the medium-to-high risk category, the physician will refer you for testing. When results are returned, he or she will work with the patient to develop a treatment plan to lower inflammation and CRP levels. That plan may include medication, dietary changes, referral to a dentist for oral treatment, and more.

The other option is to visit a *DentistryForDiabetics* dentist who treats diabetic patients. These

*** *DentistryForDiabetics*SM is a nationally recognized certification program designed to train dentists in clinical and behavioral treatment, oral complications and systemic inflammation associated with diabetes mellitus.**

dentists are trained in clinical care of diabetics and pre-diabetics, and can also order a CRP test for you, should the dentist see indications that you are living with chronic inflammation related to gum disease.

What's more, because these dentists have seen dozens (perhaps hundreds) of diabetic patients throughout training and while in practice, they know precisely how to test and translate CRP results. They know how to treat both the local infection within the gum tissue and the system-wide inflammation – both of which

must be treated to lower CRP levels.

What's interesting to note is that, according to research, periodontal treatment in the hands of a dentist certified to treat diabetic patients can safely lower CRP levels from "high" to moderate or low. In effect lowering inflammation levels as well, and enabling blood glucose to stabilize.

Some Practical Advice

If you are diabetic or pre-diabetic, concerned about C-Reactive Proteins and the associated risk for arterial and cardiac disease --

make sure you see a dentist who treats diabetic patients. See him first or see him last. But see him.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about dentistry and diabetes:

Visit the DentistryForDiabetics site www.dentistryfordiabetics.com

Talk to an internist or your primary care physician

Visit the American Diabetes Association web site www.diabetes.org



Having any kind of test performed related to your heart can be frightening. So with the idea in mind that knowledge is power (and peace of mind), here is some information that will help you understand better what happens.

C-Reactive Protein Testing What You Should Know

A CRP test is actually called the "Highly Sensitive C-Reactive Protein" exam (or hs-CRP). The results are expressed in terms of milligrams of CRP per liter, which is written as mg/L.

What the Results Tell You

Results indicate a low risk if the level of CRP is less than 1 mg/L. A level of 1 – 3 mg/L indicates an average risk. Above 3 mg/L is considered high risk. If you're in the high-risk group, you have about twice the risk of cardiovascular disease as those in the low-risk group. If you are in the low or average-risk groups, there's probably nothing to worry about. Your doctor and your

dentist may want to keep an eye on your CRP levels and do additional testing to make sure they are not rising.

Even if you're in the high-risk group, you have taken the first crucial step toward lowering your CRP levels and the associated inflammation that can lead to heart disease.

As mentioned above, if you are diabetic (or pre-diabetic) with high CRP levels, chances are periodontal disease is part of the problem. Visit a dentist certified in the care of diabetic patients, so he can evaluate and treat oral infection and associated systemic inflammation.

Oral Health & Treatment:

Research shows that when gum disease is treated both locally and systemically, using antimicrobials, CRP levels fall significantly.