

# Forget About Fat and Cholesterol! It's Stress That Causes Heart Disease

Vergiss Fett und Cholesterin! Stress ist die Ursache für Herzkrankheiten

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## Themenschwerpunkt Stresspsychologie

*"All truth passes through three stages.  
First, it is ridiculed,  
Second it is violently opposed, and  
Third, it is accepted as self-evident."*

Arthur Schopenhauer

### Abstract

*The lipid hypothesis posits that a high fat diet elevates cholesterol and that high cholesterol causes heart attacks due to coronary atherosclerosis. Neither of these statements are correct. Stress is a much more important cause of heart disease and sudden death.*

### Zusammenfassung

*Die Lipidhypothese besagt, dass ein hoher Fettgehalt in der Nahrung die Cholesterinwerte im Blut erhöht und dass hohes Cholesterin Herzinfarkte verursacht. Keine dieser beiden Annahmen ist korrekt. Stress ist ein viel wichtigerer Verursacher von Herzkrankheiten und plötzlichem Tod.*

If you asked anyone, including physicians, "What causes heart attacks?" the vast majority would blame cholesterol, followed by cigarettes, hypertension, and perhaps heredity, obesity or diabetes. However, high cholesterol would be numero uno. And if you asked what caused this, the response would likely be a diet that included liberal amounts of saturated fat from meat and/or cholesterol from eggs and dairy products. It's not hard to understand why, since it is easy to visualize how high blood cholesterol from fat precipitates out into the coronary arteries and how these fatty deposits continually build up to obstruct blood flow. These eventually occlude the vessel, resulting in a myocardial infarction in muscle tis-

sue deprived of oxygen and nutrients.

A few decades ago, the terms coronary occlusion and myocardial infarction were essentially synonymous. Having a "heart attack" could refer to either or both. We now know this is erroneous. It's possible to have a complete occlusion of a coronary artery without any significant injury to heart muscle due to the gradual buildup of collateral circulation. It is not uncommon to see this in autopsies on elderly individuals that have never had any signs or symptoms of heart disease. Myocardial infarction without significant coronary atherosclerosis has been shown to occur in humans and animals as a result of severe stress that releases excessive amounts of norepinephrine at myocardial nerve endings. Similarly, intense emotional excitement that produces an outpouring of adrenaline can cause sudden cardiac death due to a lethal arrhythmia in the absence of either coronary atherosclerosis or myocardial damage. This has been reported in healthy people following the unexpected death of a loved one, as well as a 20 year-old bride overcome with joy on her wedding night. None of these cardiac problems are due to cholesterol.

### 1. The Pure Purpose Of This Presentation Is To Prove That

1. Increased fat consumption has little effect on elevating blood cholesterol.
2. Elevated cholesterol is not the cause of coronary atherosclerosis or heart attacks.
3. Stress has a far more important influence on the pathogenesis of coronary atherosclerosis, myocardial infarction and sudden cardiac death than cholesterol.

Since these seemingly heretical statements are supported by solid scientific studies, how did this fallacious li-