



THE LATEST IN WEARABLE
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY



Lipoprotein(a)
AN IMPORTANT
CHOLESTEROL MARKER

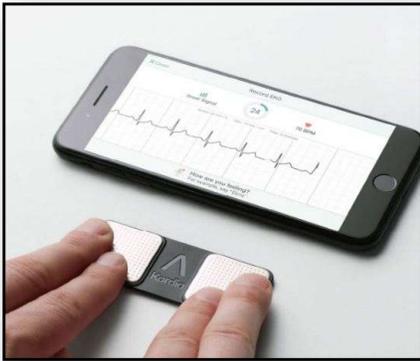
LP(A):WHAT IS IT AND WHY
DOES IT MATTER?

NAPLES CONCIERGE **NEWSLETTER**
CARDIOLOGY & INTERNAL MEDICINE

As the summer months approach and the 2025 season comes to an end, we know many of you will be seeking cooler climates, enjoying vacations, and evading looming hurricanes. We strive to deliver our patients the utmost in quality medical care, and feel strongly that service and leadership in our local healthcare organizations allow us to keep up with the dynamic changes occurring. For example, Dr. Rao is now the president-elect of the NCH medical staff, and Dr. Tassin serves on the NCH Practitioners Excellence Committee. We are also active members of the Collier County Medical Society, participate in the local chapter of The American Heart Association, and volunteer at The Neighborhood Health Clinic. Additionally, we maintain a network of contacts with colleagues at major medical institutions around the country to aid in care coordination for our patients. Recently, through an event hosted by the Physician's Wellness Committee(chaired by Dr. Rao), we welcomed Dr. Elizabeth Frates, a professor at Harvard Medical School and the former president of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, to discuss emerging medical trends in the realm of lifestyle medicine. In this edition of our newsletter, we will review a variety of wearable medical devices, discuss the relevance of Lipoprotein(a), and provide you with updates regarding the construction of NCH's orthopedic and cardiac institutes.

Wearable Medical Devices; Picking The Right One

When it comes to new medical gadgets it seems there is a nearly endless supply; but which devices are the most useful and impactful in managing and improving your health? The answer depends on your specific health goals and needs. For instance, for those of you with a history of a heart arrhythmia or unspecified palpitations, using a device to record your heart rhythm can be very helpful. While we offer several types of medical grade heart monitors in our office, personal devices allow for monitoring readily available at your fingertips, which is ideal for patients with rare symptoms that may be difficult to otherwise identify. There are a number of smart watches with this capability including specific watch models made by Apple, Fitbit, Garmin, Google Pixel, Samsung Galaxy, and Tesla. These devices continuously monitor your heart rate, but only record an ECG when you initiate the recording, which typically takes about 30 seconds to acquire.



An alternative to a smart watch is the Kardia Mobile or the EMAY systems which are both portable ECG monitors. They are cheaper than most smartwatches ranging from \$79 to \$169 respectively, but do require that you carry an additional small device with your phone to use it while away from home. They each have the capability of providing a 6 lead ECG that can be saved and shared with your doctors.

Fitness And Athletic Conditioning:

The WHOOP is a small, flat device that is worn on a wristband (pictured to the right). It provides detailed performance analysis which can be used to adjust the intensity and duration of training, optimize recovery, and identify overtraining. It can also calculate VO2 max,



which is an estimation of how much oxygen your body uses during exercise, and is a general estimate of cardiovascular fitness. The amount of data it produces, however, can be overwhelming for some users. The Apple, FitBit, and Garmin smart watches as well as the Oura ring, provide similar health tracking information such as heart rate variability, resting heart rate monitoring, step tracking, and sleep quality. The Garmin Forerunner is ideal for the running enthusiast because it has built in GPS that enables use of maps, run tracking, pacing, and training metrics. The Oura ring (pictured to the left), has a sleeker look

mimicking a piece of jewelry, and provides scores in 4 categories (Sleep, Activity, Readiness, and Resilience) that helps to simplify data analysis. It also measures body temperature changes which can be used to monitor fertility and ovulation.

Nutrition, Weight Loss, and Glucose Monitoring:

The Lumen tracker is a handheld device which determines if you are burning fat or carbohydrates by measuring the concentration of carbon dioxide in your exhaled breath. This can be used to help optimize your metabolism, fine tune intermittent fasting durations, and lose weight.





Continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) are a more convenient way for patients with diabetes mellitus to monitor and control their glucose levels. CGMs can also help people without diabetes mellitus gain insight into how their diet affects their glucose, which in turn can aid in weight loss as well as HbA1c reduction. These devices measure glucose in real time by continuously measuring the glucose level in the interstitial fluid just below the skin and then transmit

that information to your smartphone. This avoids the need for finger sticks, which can be uncomfortable and messy. We are increasingly recommending these devices to improve metabolic control, even for patients who are not diabetics.

Safety: For those of you who struggle with impaired mobility or balance, a fall is a serious threat to your well-being. Ensuring you can get help quickly is imperative. There are a number of available wearable devices that have fall detection capabilities. Options to consider when choosing a device include landline versus cellular connections, pendant style versus smartwatches or mobile devices, ease of use, caregiver accessibility, and cost of subscription services. Bay Alarm Medical, LifeFone, and Medical Guardian are some of the highest rated options. The Apple Watch also has fall detection capabilities that can be enabled on newer models. Whatever your unique healthcare needs may be, there is undoubtedly a medical device available that can suit them, and the technology continues to improve at a rapid pace!

Lp(a): What is it and why does it matter?

Lipoprotein(a), also known as Lp(a), is a molecule in the blood that is involved in cholesterol transport. High levels of Lp (a) are a genetically determined, independent, risk factor for cardiovascular disease and it is estimated that approximately 20-25% of the population have high Lp (a) levels. Specifically, a high Lp(a) level increases an individual's risk of a heart attack, stroke, or calcific aortic stenosis. It is also associated with a higher risk of having these problems at a younger age than the general population. These levels typically do not respond to lifestyle changes like adhering to a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and participating in regular exercise. An elevated Lp (a) level can, however, help determine an individual's risk of cardiovascular disease in addition to other factors like family history, smoking status, weight, diet, as well as HDL, LDL, and triglyceride levels. Several medications are currently under investigation that will be able to significantly reduce Lp(a) levels by as much as 80%.

It is anticipated that these medications will be available within the next few years, and have the potential to dramatically change the treatment of cardiovascular disease. Until these agents are commercially available, the treatment for individuals with high Lp



(a) levels is aimed at trying to optimize their other cardiovascular risk factors. Statin medications lower the LDL level but do not significantly impact Lp(a) levels. Alternatively, PCSK9 inhibitors, injectable medications such as Repatha or Praluent, do lower Lp (a) but to a much lesser extent than emerging therapies such as Pelacarsen. Lp(a) is not included as part of a standard cholesterol blood test, but can be easily measured by obtaining a separate blood test. We feel it is important for our patients to have it checked once in their lifetime for screening purposes. Lp(a) levels can be inherited, therefore it is recommended that the family members of individuals with high Lp(a) levels undergo testing to determine their own risk.

Naples Comprehensive Healthcare Updates

NCH has been named one of America's 50 Best Hospitals for 2025 according to Healthgrades, placing it in the top 1% of all U.S. hospitals. Additionally, NCH is currently the only hospital in the nation to achieve Healthgrades' highest recognition in three critical



areas: Cardiac Care, Orthopedic Surgery, and Overall Clinical Excellence. Orthopedic care at NCH will further be enhanced by its collaboration with the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS), which has ranked number 1 in orthopedic care for 16 years. NCH's new orthopedic facility recently debuted on May 2nd. Patty and Jay Baker (pictured left), one of Collier Counties most generous philanthropic couples, were fundamental in orchestrating this collaboration and donated the initial \$20 million of the total \$140 million project.



The new facility is three stories, 100,000-square-feet, and located on the NCH North Naples Hospital campus. Arthrex, a medical device company and leader in new product development in orthopedics, helped design and equip the operating rooms with the most advanced technology in the world. The Dari Motion System and numerous cutting edge robotic devices, will allow for the completion of minimally invasive surgical procedures. Furthermore, the facility will be staffed by esteemed nationally recognized surgeons such as the medical director, Dr. David Backstein, as well as nine fellowship trained subspecialty surgeons.

Construction for the R.M. Schulze Family Cardiovascular and Stroke Critical Care Center at NCH's downtown campus has also begun. The Telford building has been nearly completely taken down for the new institute to take its place. The 189,000-square-foot, five-story Rooney Heart Institute and Wingard Stroke Institute is expected to be completed in 2027. While the building is under construction, self-parking at the Downtown NCH campus will be limited but available in the 8th St garage or with complimentary valet service.



Please let us know if there are specific topics you would like to see covered in our next newsletter. We wish you all a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Drs. Rao & Tassin