

2025 COLLIER HEART WALK



INTRODUCING...



INFLAMMATION & THE HEART



NEWSLETTER



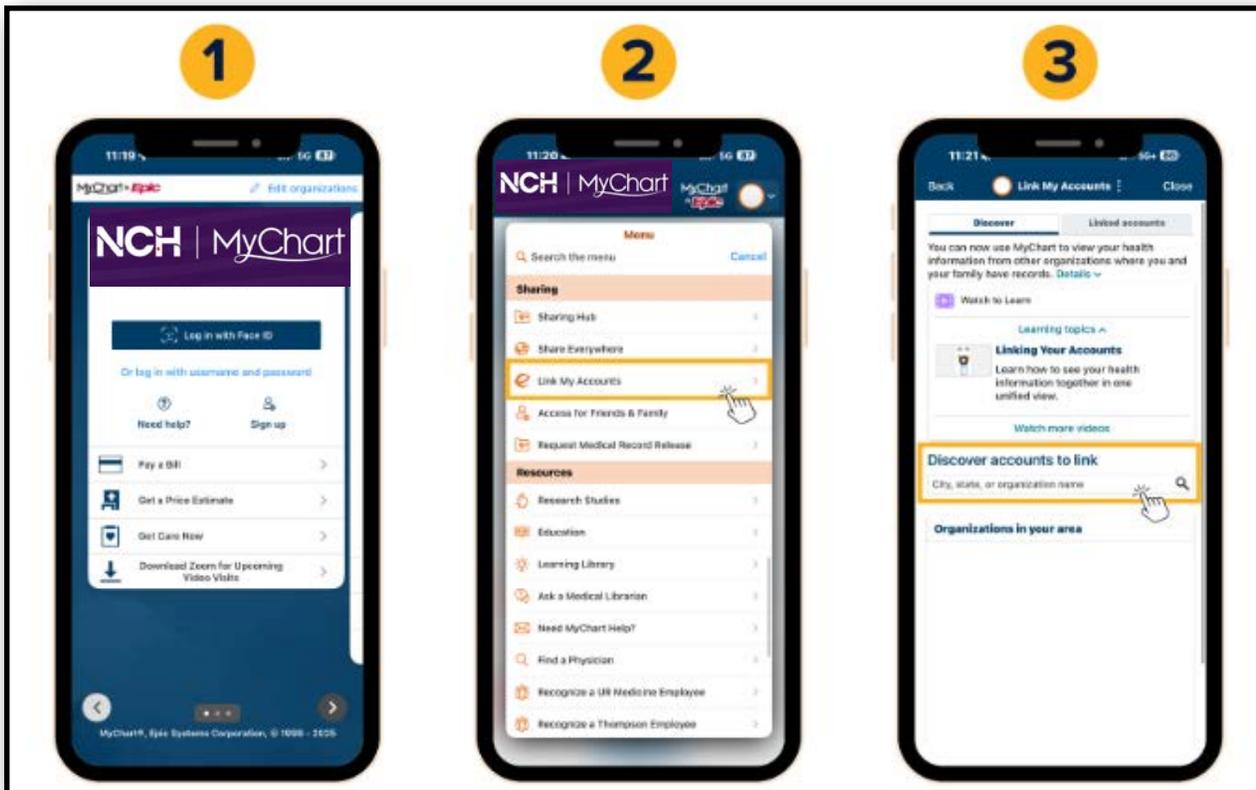
Top Fundraiser at the Collier County Heart Walk!

Our practice again proudly supported this annual community event which aims to raise awareness for heart disease, teach bystander CPR, and fund ongoing medical research. This year the 5K (3.1 mile) walk took place on a beautiful day at Baker Park on December 13th. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to those of you who contributed to our team. Thanks to your generous support our team was proud to be the event's top fundraiser by raising nearly \$43,000 for the American Heart Association. In aggregate, the event raised roughly \$425,000. We encourage you to become part of the solution by learning CPR. Go to cpr.heart.org to learn more.



New Medical Record System; New Accessibility

This Fall our practice implemented Epic as our new electronic medical record system. Epic is a comprehensive integrated software system used by most large healthcare organizations to manage patient data and improve clinical care coordination. A large driver for making this transition was to provide our patients with MyChart accessibility. MyChart offers personalized and secure online access to your medical records. It enables you to manage and receive information about your health. With MyChart, you can view your health information, including medications, allergies, test results, and more. You can also request refills and send messages directly to Drs. Rao and Tassin.



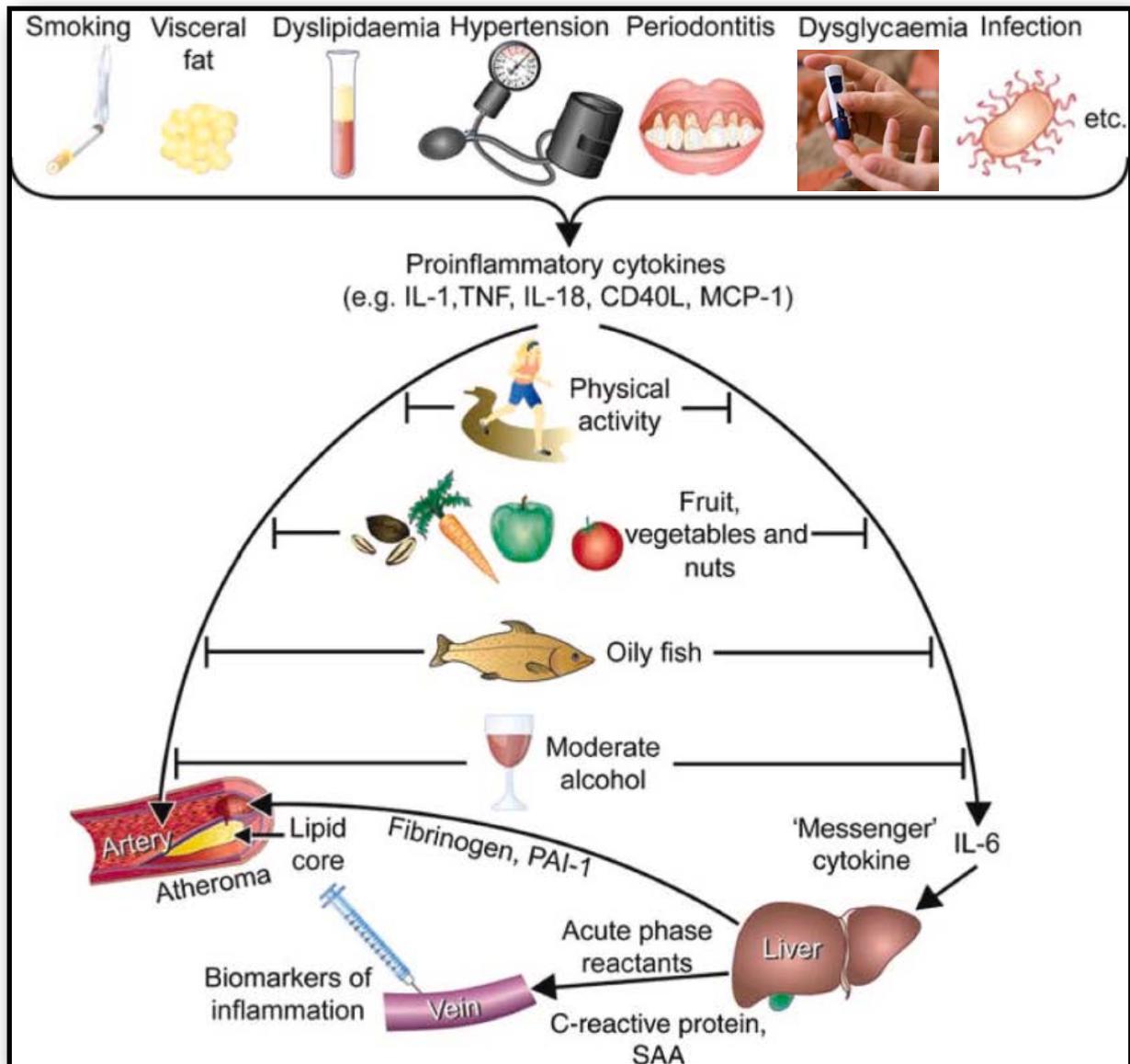
Another widely used feature of Epic is called "Happy Together." This application allows multiple healthcare organizations to pull all of your medical records together in order to view them in one place. This results in more synchronized and coordinated medical care. Although it is necessary for you to initially make separate MyChart accounts for each of your healthcare facilities, you can subsequently link your MyChart accounts from different hospitals/clinics into one, so you see everything (medications, test results, etc.) in one spot with one login. To do this, find the "Happy Together" or "Link Accounts" feature in your MyChart portal and search for other organizations you've visited (see image above). Then log into the external account once to verify so that it will be linked for future access. For more assistance with setting up a MyChart account and using MyChart features, email MyChart@nchmd.org or call the MyChart Patient Support Line at (239) 624-0099.

Inflammation and Cardiovascular Risk

The American College of Cardiology recently released a scientific statement assessing the critical role inflammation plays in cardiovascular disease. In addition to well established risk factors for development of cardiovascular disease such as tobacco abuse, elevated cholesterol, elevated blood pressure, and obesity, a growing body of evidence has established that chronic low grade inflammation is a strong predictor of cardiovascular disease as well as subsequent cardiovascular events such as strokes and heart attacks. Inflammation is regulated in the body by a complex system of messengers called cytokines. These are small proteins that are secreted by the immune system in response to certain triggers including infections, injuries, autoimmune diseases (such as lupus, Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, etc), and periodontal disease. Chronic inflammation promotes development of

atherosclerosis, or cholesterol build up in the arterial wall, and also hastens plaque rupture which can lead to a stroke or heart attack. Conversely, dietary and lifestyle habits that reduce inflammation, have been shown to mitigate cardiovascular risk. These habits include:

- Regular aerobic exercise—specifically 150 minutes or more per week of moderate, or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic exercise
- Consistent consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and olive oil
- Routine dietary intake of omega-3 fatty acids; 2-3 fish meals/week—preferably fatty fish high in EPA+DHA
- Minimize red and processed meats, refined carbohydrates, and sugary beverages
- Reduce stress by participating in pilates, yoga, meditation and/or prayer, and maintain positive social relationships



A surrogate marker of inflammation called high sensitivity C reactive protein (HS-CRP) can easily be measured in the blood. HS-CRP levels can then be used to assess an individual's risk of cardiovascular disease and used to determine targeted therapies, in a similar way that LDL measurements are utilized. One such therapy may be intensification of statin therapy in a patient whose LDL is already at goal but CRP level remains elevated, as statins are known to have an anti-inflammatory effect. Another therapy consideration may be a medication called colchicine, which is commonly used to treat gout. Colchicine has been approved by the FDA to reduce the risk of myocardial infarction, stroke, coronary revascularization, and cardiovascular death in adult patients with established atherosclerotic disease or with multiple risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Moreover, novel anti-inflammatory therapeutic agents are actively being evaluated in ongoing randomized trials in the settings of chronic kidney disease, heart failure, and acute coronary syndrome. Further assessments of inflammation include noninvasive imaging modalities that not only identify plaque (i.e. cholesterol build up in arterial walls) but also assess degree of vascular inflammation and potential for plaque rupture. These types of imaging modalities have not become widely utilized partially due to cost and insurance coverage, but will likely become the standard of care over the coming years.



Please let us know if there are specific topics you would like to see covered in our next newsletter. We wish you a happy holiday season and new year!

Sincerely,

Drs. Rao and Tassin