



## QUICK TEST AT HAND; CHEAP AND EASY METHOD PINPOINTS CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

The Ottawa Sun

Tue 08 Mar 2005

Page: 23

Section: News

Byline: BY SARAH ROGERS, OTTAWA SUN

Column: Health

A NEW test that measures skin cholesterol could help save millions of Canadians by preventing heart disease before it happens.

**PREVU** Point of Care Skin Sterol Test predicts the presence and extent of heart disease in patients that have no visible symptoms. The test, already approved in Canada and the U.S., is a three minute-long procedure that is less expensive and more effective than blood tests.

"This testing has the ability to help patients at risk of heart disease, non-invasively and cost effectively," said Dr. Brent Norton, CEO of Toronto's International Medical Innovations, which funded **PREVU's** studies.

"The issue is, can we predict who's more likely to have a heart attack?" We've found a technology to narrow it down. And that's going to save the Canadian system money."

### FATTY SUBSTANCE

The test gathers information from the amount of cholesterol, or sterol, in skin tissue. Cholesterol, a fatty substance found in human tissue, can be both good and bad for the body. Cholesterol that lines tissues or membranes and remains in the blood stream is a concern for the heart's health.

"We're trying to get a handle on what is staying behind," Norton said.

In the 1970s, researchers noticed that middle-aged men with heart disease had high levels of cholesterol.

"Taking a blood sample was the easiest way then to determine cholesterol, but blood cholesterol itself wasn't a great measure," Norton said.

Now the test is easy and literally in the palm of your hand.

"The actual procedure is a Band-Aid template put on your palm," Norton said. "The procedure is very simple."

A developing solution is applied to the area, which changes colour from clear to blue depending on how high your cholesterol is. The whole process takes three minutes.

The test is based on the last 30 days, meaning that fasting or last-minute changes to your diet won't affect the test results. "You can't cheat it," Norton said.

The bulk of middle-aged Canadians are in an intermediate group, Norton explains, meaning they are considered to be at moderate risk. The sterol test helps target those who need further treatment and helps others avoid taking unnecessary drugs.

In 1999, more than one-third of all deaths in Canada were due to cardiovascular diseases. The World Health Organization predicts that by 2025, heart diseases will cause 25 million deaths annually.

Illustration:

- photo by Canada News Wire
- THE NEW **PREVU** Point of Care Skin Sterol Test uses "a Band-Aid template" and developing solution to indicate the presence of cholesterol levels on a patient's skin.

Edition: Final  
Length: 388 words