



## **Advanced Heart Care for the Prevention & Treatment of Heart Disease and Stroke Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Question 1 – What is *Advanced* Heart Care for the Prevention & Treatment of Heart Disease and Stroke?**

*Advanced* Heart Care consists of research-based tests and expert guidance from your WMC provider. Routine medical care provides the same recommendations to everyone across large populations. This *Advanced* medicine model gathers information to help us personalize the recommendations that are specific to you.

### **Question 2 - Who would benefit from *Advanced* Heart Care?**

Anyone! We combine national recommendations with research-based testing to individualize care to you. This program would also benefit those who consider themselves healthy but would like to prevent future problems associated with aging.

### **Question 3- Why does this program have added costs? Will insurance cover any of the additional expense?**

Labs sometimes cost more, but provider visit costs and health coaching do not change. Knowing exactly what insurance will or will not pay for is hard to determine. Some of the lab tests are covered by insurance. However, it takes years for health plans to start covering the cost of new testing. Even if the test is covered, there are co-pays and deductibles to consider. We partner with laboratories that provide you with the best tests at the lowest cost. We do not mark up the lab testing because your payment goes directly to the lab. To be able to offer advanced testing, it takes additional time for our staff. **So there is a coordination fee of \$58** when labs are drawn.

In the long run, this is a small investment for the great returns of improving your health. Diseases such as heart disease or stroke can **cost between \$10,000 - \$18,000 every year<sup>1</sup>**. We made great efforts to make this program affordable and are proud to make it accessible to those who want advanced, cutting-edge care.

### **Question 4 - Why aren't other primary care doctors or specialists I see offering similar new lab testing? Why aren't my family and friends getting similar testing like *Advanced* Heart Care?**

Personalized Medicine is slowly growing and your other physicians, family and friends may not have been exposed to this current research or have the time to pursue training. Specialists and Primary Care doctors can and do take care of patients differently. As independent doctors, we can decide how to practice medicine with modern treatment options to offer our patients. We believe you should have the opportunity to take advantage of the medicine of the future now.

### **Question 5 - When is the best time to switch from routine lab testing to *Advanced* lab testing?**

Anytime! The personal demands and responsibilities of our lives never seem to get easier so there is no "better time" to start than now. You do not need to have a perfect diet or exercise plan. You do not need to be taking supplements. We offer health coaching to help you set realistic goals, stick to them, and make them more likely to become permanent and positive change. It is helpful to have a Health Coach guide your way and support your efforts and filter out the confusion and misinformation of the internet.

The lab testing is just a first step to start improving your future health today. Your provider at Westminster Medical Clinic will ask you to return to discuss your lab results and recommend that you get *Advanced* lab testing in 3-6 months to track your progress.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ajmc.com/journals/issue/2010/2010-03-vol16-n03/ajmc\\_10marnicholswebx\\_e86to93](http://www.ajmc.com/journals/issue/2010/2010-03-vol16-n03/ajmc_10marnicholswebx_e86to93)  
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## ***Did you know that 50% of People Who Die Suddenly from a Heart Attack had Normal LDL-cholesterol Levels<sup>2</sup>?***

### **Are You at Risk?**

The risk factors for developing heart disease are based on guidelines from the American Heart Association.

- **Age** – Your risk increases with age.
- **Gender** – Men are at higher risk if over 45 years of age and women if over 55 years of age.
- **Family History** – Your risk is higher if members of your family have had heart disease or heart attack or stroke at a younger age.
- **Genetics** – Your risk is higher depending on some of your genes and proteins in your body. Ask about genetic testing!
- **High Blood Pressure** – Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg when you are at rest. Risk increases as your blood pressure increases above this level. Advanced testing can tell us more about your risk. Ask about “central blood pressure” testing.
- **Physical Inactivity** – Sitting for too long increases your risk. Even moving around or standing for periods throughout the day can help.
- **Obesity or Overweight** – Your risk is higher with a Body Mass Index (BMI) above 27.5. Losing extra body weight helps more than you might think! Ask about health coaching.
- **Alcohol and Tobacco Use** – Research shows that tobacco use increases your risk. Alcohol use can increase or decrease risk depending on your genetics and how much you drink. Ask about genetic testing!
- **Inflammation and Chronic Illness** – Your risk increases if you have a chronic illness such as diabetes or hypertension. Risk also increases if you have a history of chronic inflammation from diseases, poor diet, and stress.
- **Nutrition and Diet** – Research shows only 2 out of 100 people aged 50 and older follow a good nutritional diet and lifestyle. Ask about health coaching!

Using the Risk Factors, **Your Risk** of Heart Attack, Death, or Declining Heart Health in the Next 10 Years is



**Bringing Better, Personalized Testing to You.  
Prevent Heart Attack and Stroke, or Treat Heart Disease.  
Get **Advanced** Heart Care.**

## **Advanced Heart Care – Level 1 Testing**

**WMC combines 3 approaches** to prevent and treat heart attack and stroke.



*Know your risk.*

### **1<sup>st</sup> – Look at your blood and metabolism.**

**Cleveland Heart Lab** is owned by Quest Diagnostics, a very large laboratory. Cleveland Heart Lab contracts with each insurance company to offer tests at proprietary (unknown) costs. Westminster Medical Clinic provides an estimate based on a best-guess. Because costs can vary, or if you do not wish to use your insurance, WMC offers a flat, cash rate for Level 1 Testing.

You may choose 1 of the following **Options** –

1. Cleveland Heart Lab to bill your insurance plan for lab work (\$40-\$325).
2. Pay a Cash rate and your insurance plan will not be billed (\$160).

Westminster Medical Clinic collects a care coordination fee of \$58 on the day of your lab draw. This cost is in addition to the cost ranges listed under **Options**. Generally, Westminster Medical Clinic recommends re-testing 2-4 times per year (every 3-6 months) until improvement or until you have reached your goals.



### **2<sup>nd</sup> – Look at your arteries.**

**Boone Medical Imaging** provides Carotid IMTs at Westminster Medical Clinic on the same day when you get your labs drawn with Cleveland Heart Lab. Westminster Medical Clinic collects \$250 on the day of your C-IMT.



### **3<sup>rd</sup> – Look at your heart.**

**Westminster Medical Clinic** provides Central Blood Pressure testing at the clinic on the same day as lab draws and C-IMTs. Westminster Medical will collect \$65 for the **first** Central Blood Pressure test. To monitor your Central Blood Pressure, WMC attempts to schedule future tests either at Annual Wellness Visits or Office Visits to minimize your cost. Your Annual Wellness or Office Visit will be approximately 15 minutes longer.

## **Advanced Heart Care – Level 1 Test Descriptions**

**WMC combines 3 approaches** to prevent and treat heart attack and stroke.



### **1<sup>st</sup> – Look at your blood and metabolism.**

*Know your risk.*

**Advanced Lipid Panel** – The tests in this panel are not used in standard lipid (cholesterol) testing. The panel includes several cholesterol and triglyceride tests that help us identify individuals at risk of, or who have, cardiovascular disease, who are missed in usual testing. It is also a way to monitor progress in lipid (cholesterol) treatment.

**ApoB** – Measures the true number of atherogenic particles (particles that lead to fatty plaque build-up) and measures the risk for heart attack.

**ApoA1** – Indicates how well cholesterol is removed from the artery wall to the liver for excretion. The test result, in combination with ApoB, indicates the balance of cholesterol in your body and is directly linked to risk for heart attack and stroke.

**sdLDL** – Measures a type of “bad cholesterol” called Small Dense LDL. The result is a strong risk factor for Cardiovascular Disease and progression of the disease.

**Lp(a)** – Tests the amount of a lipid-protein in your blood. The protein is rich in LDL particles and is associated with increased risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. Importantly, the result of this test is genetically-determined and is not affected by your lifestyle or nutrition.

**HDL2b** – Measures the amount of this specific type (2b) of High Density Lipoprotein (HDL). HDLs move cholesterol from your tissues to your liver for excretion.

**Comprehensive Metabolic Panel** – Tests how well your organs (kidney, liver) are functioning. Also tests if your fluids and electrolytes (sodium, potassium) are in balance.

**High Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein** – Measures a protein in your blood that indicates you have inflammation.

**OmegaCheck** – Tests the amount of fatty acids (fats) in your blood and helps determine whether you need dietary changes or supplementation to improve the balance of fats in your blood.

**Hemoglobin A1c** – Tests the amount of sugar that coats a certain protein (hemoglobin) in your red blood cells. The test gives an average amount of sugar-coated proteins over the last 3 months, indicating your blood sugar level. The result tells us how well your body can control sugar levels in your body.

**Microalbumin/Creatinine Ratio** – Tests for any damage to the lining in your artery walls. Damage to the lining of arteries in the kidneys are the first sign of disease of the heart.

**Coenzyme Q10** – Coenzyme Q10 is an anti-oxidant to protect tissues from damage, inflammation, and helps cells make energy. This test measures how well your body is making Coenzyme Q10 in addition to what you get from your diet. Coenzyme Q10 decreases when you take statins and other heart medications (so you may need extra).

**Vitamin D** – Measures the amount of Vitamin D in your blood, which can be found in some foods. In Colorado, most people do not get enough Vitamin D from spending time in the sun. A low level of Vitamin D is associated with bone and muscle problems, and can increase your risk for Cardiovascular Disease, common cancers, and autoimmune conditions.



## **2<sup>nd</sup> – Look at your arteries.**

**Carotid Imaging (C-IMT)** – An ultrasound measures the thickness of your carotid arteries (the large arteries in your neck). The thickness of the carotid artery indicates how much plaque has built up. You are able to see your “Age” (how fast you are aging) based on the thickness of your artery.



## **3<sup>rd</sup> – Look at your heart.**

**Central Blood Pressure** – Tests the blood pressure of the aorta, which is a very large artery that pumps blood away from your heart. Measuring the blood pressure of the aorta (central blood pressure) instead of the blood pressure in your arm (peripheral blood pressure) is a more accurate, true measure of your blood pressure. The test predicts your risk for heart attack or stroke. Some medications can lower the blood pressure in the arm but not the pressure at the heart, making medications and treatment less effective.