

Cholesterol

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in your blood. It is produced naturally by your body and found in some foods you eat. There are several types of cholesterol found in the body:

- Low density lipoprotein (LDL) which is also known as “bad” cholesterol as it increases your risk of coronary heart disease.
- High density lipoprotein (HDL) which is known as “good” cholesterol as it protects you against developing coronary heart disease.
- Triglycerides. Evidence suggest that some people with high triglycerides levels are at an increased risk of developing coronary heart disease.

Too much cholesterol in the blood causes fatty deposits to gradually build up in your blood vessels. This makes it harder for blood to flow through, which can cause a heart attack or stroke.

There are often no symptoms or signs of high cholesterol – you can have high cholesterol and feel well. Therefore, it is important that you have regular cholesterol checks by your doctor. This is done by a simple blood test.

The following factors increase the risks of serious problems associated with high cholesterol:

- Smoking
- Having high blood pressure
- Being overweight
- Having diabetes.

Managing your cholesterol

Making lifestyles changes is very important to help reduce your cholesterol

- Eat a healthy and balanced diet – including a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Be active every day. You should aim for 30 minutes or more of physical activity every day
- Manage your blood pressure
- Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight
- Quit smoking or remain smoke free
- Take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor
- Have your cholesterol checked regularly by your Doctor, as part of an assessment of your overall risk of heart, stroke and blood vessel disease. The higher your risk, the more often that you should have these checks.

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