

Treatment

Based on your risk factors and your "bad" cholesterol levels, your doctor may prescribe cholesterol-lowering medication. For treatment to be effective, it is important that medication be taken regularly, even if you do not feel its beneficial effects. These medications are prescribed to complement healthy lifestyle habits, but do not replace them.

Your doctor will schedule regular follow-ups and will probably order blood tests. It is very important that you comply, so that the medical professionals who are trying to help you can monitor your progress.

For more information or support:
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
www.heartandstroke.ca

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High Cholesterol



Cholesterol is naturally present in the body and is responsible for a range of life-sustaining functions. While 80% of this fat-like substance is produced in the liver, about 20% of the cholesterol in our blood comes from the foods we eat. When there is too much cholesterol in the blood, it builds up and forms plaque, eventually causing the arteries to narrow or become blocked. This can lead to cardiovascular disease and blood clots.



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Cholesterol is carried through the bloodstream by lipoproteins, of which there are two types: LDL and HDL. LDL carries cholesterol from the liver to other parts of the body. It is commonly known as "bad" cholesterol and contributes to plaque formation. HDL carries cholesterol away from the arteries and back to the liver. It is commonly referred to as "good" cholesterol.

Screening

A blood test is the only way to detect high cholesterol.

Prevention

It is common knowledge that high cholesterol increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Cholesterol however, is not the only risk factor. Other risk factors include age, family history, being male, being diabetic, having high blood pressure, inactivity, obesity, smoking, and having reduced kidney function. While some risk factors for cardiovascular disease cannot be controlled, you can reduce your risk. Here's how:

Quit smoking

This is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Eat healthy

Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Consume whole grains, fish, and fibre. Avoid foods that are high in trans fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol

including fatty meats, fried food, baked goods, and crackers. You can also:

- Limit sugar and sweets
- Eat low-fat dairy products as well as nuts, chickpeas, lentils and other similar products

While healthy eating habits may only have a modest effect on lowering your cholesterol, they can significantly lower your risk for cardiovascular disease.

Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight

Regular exercise promotes health and prevents heart disease. According to current guidelines, adults should engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 2.5 hours a week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more (30 minutes a day). Muscle-strengthening exercises are also recommended at least twice a week.

Manage stress

It has been proven that stress is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Seek professional help if needed.

Limit alcohol consumption

The recommendation is 1 to 2 drinks per day.

