

## - Blood pressure

# How is cholesterol treated?

Muscat Daily · 20 Dec 2022 · 16 · Dr r Ganesan Consultant - Interventional Cardiology Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Ruwi

Cholesterol is a waxy, fatlike substance in your cells. Our bodies generally make all the cholesterol needed for good health. Cholesterol helps make hormones, vitamin D, and substances to help you digest foods.

Two kinds of lipoproteins carry the cholesterol. You may have heard about 'good' and 'bad' cholesterol. High-density lipoprotein

(HDL) is the 'good' cholesterol. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is the 'bad' cholesterol.

### Treatment goals

The main goal in treating high cholesterol is to lower your LDL or 'bad' cholesterol level. Studies prove that lowering LDL can slow, stop, or even reverse the buildup

of plaque, which is a deposit of cholesterol and other substances in your arteries. Plaque can narrow your arteries. Limiting plaque can help prevent heart attacks, strokes, and death from heart and blood vessel diseases.

### Heart-healthy lifestyle

The key to having healthy cholesterol levels is a healthy lifestyle. Begin making the following changes in your daily life. What you eat greatly affects your cholesterol levels. Adopting a hearthealthy eating plan can help keep levels in a healthy range.

The Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) programme uses

diet, physical activity, and weight management to lower cholesterol.

Other ways of eating, like the Mediterranean diet or the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan, are also good options for your heart.

Both the Mediterranean diet and DASH encourage eating whole grains, fruits, and vegetables rather than refined carbohydrates such as sugar. They recommend limiting saturated fats found in fatty cuts of meat, dairy products, coconut oil, palm kernel oil, and palm oil. Eating fish high in Omega-3 fatty acids, nuts, and certain vegetable oils such as olive oil is also encouraged.

### Physical activity

Physical activity can help lower LDL or 'bad' cholesterol and triglycerides and raise HDL or 'good' cholesterol.

### Before starting

any exercise programme, ask your doctor what level of physical activity is right for you. Generally, 150 minutes of weekly physical activity is recommended for adults. Start small and work your way up.

### Avoid stress

Research has shown that chronic stress can sometimes increase LDL or 'bad' cholesterol and decrease HDL or 'good' cholesterol levels.

### Quit smoking

Smoking lowers HDL, particularly in women, and raises LDL. To protect your heart, avoid exposure to second-hand smoke and quit smoking or vaping.

### Get enough sleep

Sleep helps heal and repair your

heart and blood vessels. The recommended nightly amount for adults is 7 to 9 hours.

#### Limit alcohol consumption

Drinking too much alcohol - more than two drinks a day for men or one drink a day for women - can raise your total cholesterol level.

#### Maintain a healthy weight

If you have high cholesterol and overweight or obesity, you may improve your health by aiming for a healthy weight. Overweight and obesity increase triglycerides and LDL levels and lower HDL levels. A healthy weight for adults is usually when the body mass index (BMI)

is between 18.5 and 24.9

#### Medication

If you make healthy lifestyle changes and your cholesterol levels are still high, your healthcare provider may prescribe medicine

to help lower your LDL or 'bad' cholesterol. Even if you take cho

lesterol medicines, keep up your healthy lifestyle changes. The combination of the medicine and heart-healthy lifestyle changes can help lower and control your cholesterol levels.

Changing your lifestyle and focusing on your health can be hard. But small changes can make a big difference for your cholesterol levels and your overall health.