

A microscopic view of various cells, including a large orange cell in the top left and several grey cells with distinct structures. A large blue curved shape covers the bottom half of the image, containing the text and logo.

keeping a lower cholesterol

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a type of fat your body makes. You also get it from foods you eat. Your body uses cholesterol for many things, such as making new cells. Having too much cholesterol can clog your blood vessels and lead to health problems, such as heart attack or stroke.

Managing your cholesterol is essential to good health. It is especially important when you have heart problems, such as Coronary Artery Disease [CAD]. You can lower your risk of heart attack and stroke by lowering your cholesterol.

How do you get cholesterol?

A number of things can affect your cholesterol levels. These are called risk factors. Some you cannot control and some you can control.

Factors you cannot control

Age: as you age, cholesterol tends to rise.

Family history: Genes play a part in how much cholesterol your body makes. High cholesterol can run in families.

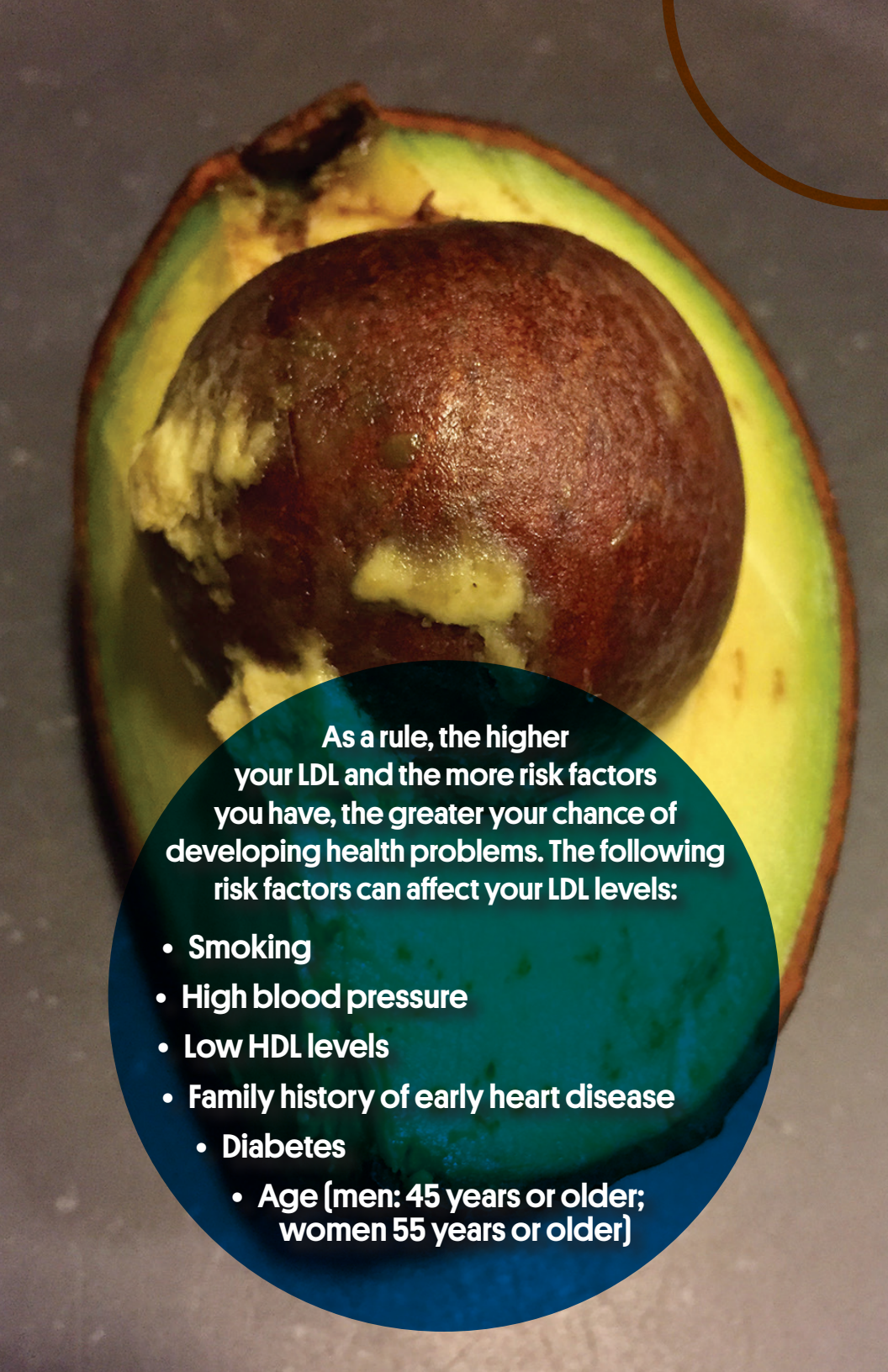
Factors you can control

Your weight: Excess weight can raise your LDL [bad] level. Losing weight can raise your HDL [good] level.

How active you are: being active can help lower your LDL level and it can help raise your HDL level. Plus it can help you lose weight. Lack of exercise can cause weight gain.

What you eat: the foods that you eat will affect your cholesterol.





As a rule, the higher your LDL and the more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of developing health problems. The following risk factors can affect your LDL levels:

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Low HDL levels
- Family history of early heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Age (men: 45 years or older; women 55 years or older)

How do you know if you have high cholesterol?

CHOLESTEROL TESTS

In managing your cholesterol it is important that you know what your levels are. So you will need to get your cholesterol levels checked with a simple blood test. These tests help you and your doctor to choose a treatment or to see how close you are to cholesterol goals.

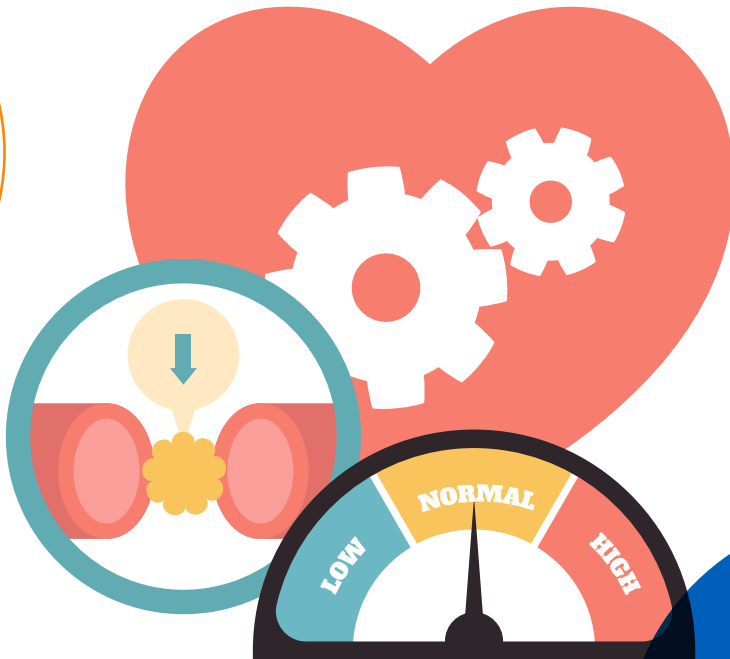
If you are taking medications for cholesterol, tests help your doctor to know if the dose or type of medicines need to be changed. Ask your doctor how often you should have your cholesterol levels checked.

Cholesterol testing includes different kind of cholesterol but the main ones are LDL and HDL levels.

LDL is often called the “bad or lousy” kind of cholesterol. HDL is often called the “good or healthy” kind. So you want to keep healthy high and lousy low.

Talk to your doctor about your cholesterol goals.

If you have CAD below are the goals for you cholesterol management.



How do you know treat and help your cholesterol levels?

Lifestyle changes may help treat high cholesterol. You should:

- Eat a heart-healthy diet
- Be active
- Lose weight if needed

If you have been diagnosed with high cholesterol or heart disease, a heart-smart diet can help you manage these conditions and lower your risk for heart attack. Your goal would be to combine a variety of healthy foods prepared in healthy ways and eat more of these foods.



BE ACTIVE

Aim for 30 minutes of activities 5 times per week.

- Maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, try to gradually lose some of your weight.
- Aerobic exercises such as walking, swimming, or riding a bike not only help you to lose weight, and they will increase your healthy cholesterol “HDL” which is good for your heart health.



TAKING YOUR MEDICINES

- Take all medicines exactly as prescribed by your doctor.
DO NOT STOP or change a medicine without talking with your doctor.
- Tell your doctor about all the medications you take, including vitamins or herbal supplements.
- You may need regular blood tests to check your liver.
- Do not drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit with your medications. A chemical in the fruit may cause more of the medicine to stay in your blood. This can make the medicine dangerous.



EAT MORE

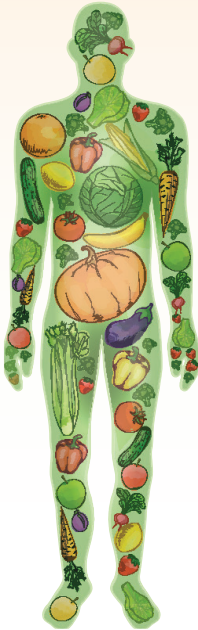
Healthy fats: raw nuts, olive oil, fish oils, flax seeds, or avocados

Nutrients: colorful fruits and vegetables - fresh or frozen, prepared without butter

Fiber: cereals, breads, and pasta made from whole grains or legumes

Omega 3 and protein: fish and shellfish, poultry

Calcium and protein: Eggs, skim or whole milk, cheeses or unsweetened yogurt



EAT LESS

Trans fats from partially hydrogenated or deep-fried foods; saturated fats from fried food, fast food, and snack foods

Packaged foods, especially those high in sodium and sugar

White or egg breads, sugary cereals, refined pastas or rice

Processed meat such as bacon, sausage, and salami, and fried chicken

Yogurt with added sugar, processed cheese



MONITOR YOUR WEIGHT

Lose weight if needed. This will help you decrease your levels of bad “LDL” cholesterol. It is more important to lose weight if you have:

- Low HDL [good] cholesterol
- High LDL [bad] cholesterol
- If your waistline is greater than 40 inches [men] and more than 35 inches [women] you are at a higher risk for cardiac disease.



It is possible that your physician will tell you to lose weight. Your meal plan should help you lose weight slowly. Ask your physician to refer you to a dietician or nutritionist who will educate you about what foods to eat and how much you need.

A dietician or nutritionist is a professional who can assist you with a meal plan that meets your individual needs and goals.

It is possible that even with lifestyle changes you may need to take medications to help reach your cholesterol goals.

There are different types of medications available to assist you in reaching your cholesterol goals. Your doctor will decide which one is right for you.

CHOLESTEROL GOALS FOR PEOPLE WITH CAD

Type of Cholesterol	Goal
LDL (bad cholesterol)	Less than 100 or less than 70 if your doctor advises
HDL (good cholesterol)	40 or higher

Learn More

These resources can help you to learn more about high cholesterol:

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

NHLBI Health Information Center

P.O. Box 30105

Bethesda, MD 20824-0105

Phone: [301] 592-8573 | TTY: [240] 629-3255

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

American Heart Association

7272 Greenville Avenue

Dallas, TX 75231

Phone: 1 [800] AHA-USA-1 or 1 [800] 242-8721

www.americanheart.org

Resources

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This information does not replace evaluation by a physician.

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National Lipid Association

<https://www.lipid.org/sites/default/files/PIIS1933287415000598.pdf>



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It is not intended to replace evaluation by a physician.

If you have questions or medical concerns, please contact
your primary care provider.