

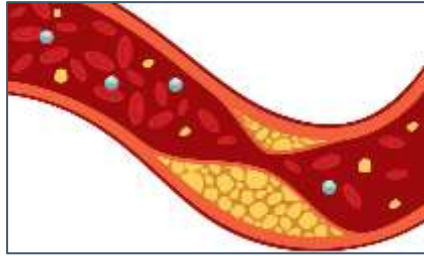
CHOLESTEROL



Family Medicine Department

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy substance your body needs to protect nerves, make cell tissues and produce certain hormones. Your liver makes all the cholesterol your body



requires. The amount depends on what types of fats you eat and your inherited genetic tendencies. Your body may also get cholesterol directly from the food you eat (such as eggs, meats and dairy products). Too much cholesterol in your blood can raise your risk of having a heart attack or stroke by blocking the arteries.

What are the “good” and “bad” cholesterol?

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is often called “bad” cholesterol. It delivers cholesterol to the body. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) is often called “good” cholesterol. It removes cholesterol from the bloodstream. This explains why too much LDL cholesterol is bad for the body, and why a high level of HDL cholesterol is good. For example, if your total cholesterol level is high because of a high LDL level, you may be at higher risk of heart disease or stroke.

Triglycerides are another type of fat in your blood. When you eat more calories than your body can use, it turns the extra calories into triglycerides. When you change your lifestyle to improve your cholesterol levels, you want to lower LDL, raise HDL and lower triglycerides.

When should I start having my cholesterol level checked?

You can't tell if you have high cholesterol without having it checked. All adults 40 years of age and older should have their cholesterol checked every 5 years. If your cholesterol level is high or you have other risk factors for heart disease, you may need to have it checked sooner and more often. Some risk factors for heart disease are being overweight or inactive, cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, existing heart disease yourself or if you have an immediate family member (parent or sibling) who has had heart disease.

What should my cholesterol levels be?

Total cholesterol level

Less than 5.2mmol/L (200mg/dL) is best.

5.21 to 6.19mmol/L (200 to 239mg/dL) is borderline high.

6.2mmol/L (240mg/dL) is high.

LDL cholesterol levels

Below 2.6mmol/L (100mg/dL) is ideal.

2.61 to 3.39mmol/L (100 to 129mg/dL) is near optimal.

3.4 to 4.1mmol/L (130 to 159mg/dL) is borderline high.

4.11mmol/L (160mg/dL) or more is high.

HDL cholesterol levels

Less than 1.05mmol/L (40mg/dL) increases the risk for heart disease but 1.5mmol/L (60mg/dL) or higher reduces this risk.

Triglycerides

Less than 1.7mmol/L is best

What lifestyle changes can I make to help improve my cholesterol levels?

Exercise regularly.



Exercise can raise HDL cholesterol levels and reduce levels of LDL cholesterol and triglycerides. If you haven't been exercising, try to work up to 30 minutes, 4 to 6 times a week. Make sure you talk to your doctor before starting an exercise plan.

Lose weight if you are overweight.

Being overweight can raise your cholesterol levels. Losing weight, even just 5 or 10 pounds, can lower your total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

If you smoke, quit.



Smoking lowers your HDL cholesterol. Even exposure to second-hand smoke can affect your HDL level. Talk to your doctor about developing a plan to help you stop smoking.

Eat a heart-healthy diet.

Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat. Not only do they add flavour and variety to your diet, but they are also the best source of fibre, vitamins, and minerals for your body. Aim for 5 cups of fruits and

vegetables every day, not counting potatoes, corn and rice. Potatoes, corn and rice count as carbohydrates.

Pick “good” fats over “bad” fats.

Fat is part of a healthy diet, but you need to know the difference between “bad” fats and “good” fats. “Bad” fats, such as saturated and trans fats, are found in foods



such as butter; coconut and palm oil; saturated or partially hydrogenated vegetable fats such as shortening and margarine; animal fats in meats; and fats in whole milk dairy products.

Limit the amount of saturated fat in your diet, and avoid trans fat completely. Unsaturated fat is the “good” fat. Most fats in fish, vegetables, grains and tree nuts are unsaturated. Try to eat unsaturated fat in place of saturated fat. For example, you can use olive oil or canola oil in cooking instead of butter. Also limit your overall cholesterol intake to less than 300 milligrams per day and 200 milligrams if you have heart disease.

Use healthier cooking methods.

Baking, broiling and roasting are the healthiest ways to prepare meat, poultry and other foods. Trim any outside fat or skin before cooking. Lean cuts can be pan-broiled or stir-fried. Use either a non-stick pan or non-stick cooking spray instead of adding fats such as butter or margarine. When eating out, ask how food is prepared. You can request that your food be baked, broiled or roasted, rather than fried.

Look for other sources of protein.

Fish, dry beans, tree nuts, peas and lentils offer protein, nutrients and fibre without the cholesterol and saturated fats that meats have. Consider eating one “meatless” meal each week. Try substituting beans for meat in a favourite recipe, such as lasagna or chili. Snack on a handful of almonds or pecans. Soy is also an excellent source of protein. Good examples of soy include soy milk, edamame (green soybeans), tofu and soy protein shakes.

Get more fibre in your diet.



Add good sources of fibre to your meals. Examples include fruits, vegetables, whole grains (such as oat bran, whole and rolled oats and barley), legumes (such as beans and peas) and nuts and seeds (such as ground flax seed). In addition to fibre, whole grains supply B-vitamins and important nutrients not found in foods made with white flour.

Eat more fish.

Fish are an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids. Wild-caught oily fish, such as salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines, are the best sources of omega-3s, but all fish contain some amount of this beneficial fatty acid. Aim for 2 6-oz servings each week.




Limit how much cholesterol you get in your diet.

You should limit your overall cholesterol intake to less than 300 milligrams per day, or less than 200 milligrams if you have heart disease.

Add supplements to your diet.

Certain supplements may help improve your cholesterol levels if changing your diet isn't enough. Some examples include:

- Plant sterols and stanols. Plant sterols and stanols can help keep your body from absorbing cholesterol. Sterols have been added to some foods (e.g. Benecol), including margarines and spreads, orange juice and yogurt. You can also find sterols and stanols in some dietary supplements.
- Omega-3 fatty acids. If you have heart disease or high triglycerides, consider taking an omega-3 or fish oil supplement. Make sure the supplement has at least 1,000 mg of EPA and DHA (these are the specific omega-3 fatty acids found in fish). 
- Red yeast rice. A common seasoning in Asian countries, red yeast rice may help reduce the amount of cholesterol your body makes. It is available as a dietary supplement. Talk to your doctor before taking red yeast rice, especially if you take another cholesterol-lowering medicine called a statin. The recommended dose of red yeast rice is 1,200 milligrams twice a day.

What about medicine to lower cholesterol?

Depending on your risk factors, if healthy eating and exercise don't work to lower your cholesterol level, your doctor may suggest medicine.



Contact us:



APPOINTMENT:
SWITCHBOARD:

(+973) 1775 7600
(+973) 1775 3333



WHATSAPP:
INSTAGRAM:
FACEBOOK:
E-MAIL:
WEBSITE:
LOCATION:

(+973) 3687 7600
awalihospital
Awali Hospital
awali.hospital@bapcoenergies.com
<https://www.awalihospital.com>
Bldg. 115, Road 4504, Block 945,
Awali Kingdom of Bahrain