

LDL Cholesterol

DRUG TREATMENT

Whether you should be on medications for cholesterol depends on your risk. Your health care provider can figure out your risk.

Drug treatments are important for those with heart or other blood vessel disease, diabetes, a history of a stroke or if you are at high risk of these. If your risk is over 20% of having a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years, you should receive drug treatment to get your LDL at least under 100 mg/dl. Statin drugs are the most effective in lowering risk and are safe for most people. Statin drugs can lower your chance of a heart attack by about 1/3 or 30%. If you had a 30% risk, that would drop to about 20% with statin medication alone. Other drugs are also available if statins do not work.

If you begin drug treatment to lower your cholesterol, you will want to continue to eat well and exercise. This will keep the dose of medicine as low as possible, and lower your risk in many other ways as well.

For more information about LDL screening testing, please contact your primary care provider.

This report was compiled by Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc. (ACHS) clinical staff for informational purposes, and does not replace any advice one might receive from a qualified health care provider.

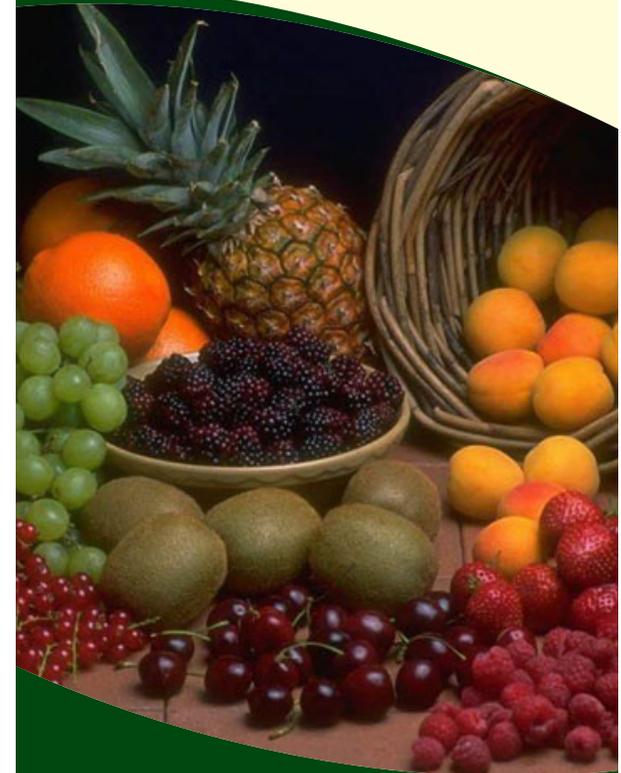
Founded in 1975, Ammonoosuc Community Health Services is a nonprofit community health center offering a network of quality, affordable primary health services. Our programs promote and support the well-being of individuals and families by emphasizing preventive care and encouraging active participation in one's own health. ACHS serves 26 towns in northern Grafton and southern Coos counties and has sites located in Littleton, Franconia, Whitefield, Warren and Woodsville. We provide comprehensive services, regardless of one's ability to pay, to over 10,000 patients.



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Information for a Healthy Life



LDL Cholesterol

is yours where it needs to be?



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LDL Cholesterol *is yours where it needs to be?*

High LDL cholesterol is one of the big risk factors for heart disease. Heart disease is the number one killer of both women and men in the United States.

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a type of fat that comes from two sources: about 75% made in your body and 25% from the food you eat. Your total cholesterol is made up of different types including LDL cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein) and HDL cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein) and triglycerides.

LDL AND TRIGLYCERIDES ARE "UNHEALTHY" CHOLESTEROL TYPES

If there is too much in the blood, it can build up in the walls of the blood vessels and can slow or block blood flow. If a blood clot forms and blocks a clogged blood vessel going into your heart or brain, a heart attack or stroke occurs. High LDL cholesterol is a major cause of heart attacks. People do not feel differently with high LDL cholesterol and therefore often do not know until a heart attack or stroke happens. That is why checking cholesterol and knowing your risk is so important.

HOW CAN I CHECK MY CHOLESTEROL LEVELS?

A simple blood test can check your cholesterol and might include: LDL (unhealthy) cholesterol (a high level of LDL cholesterol means there's a higher risk of heart disease and stroke); triglycerides (another unhealthy type of

cholesterol that rises with being overweight or not exercising); HDL (healthy) cholesterol (the higher your HDL cholesterol, the better).

Most men should consider having their cholesterol levels checked @ age 35 and women @ age 45. Starting younger is a good idea if there is a strong family history of heart disease, or you have other risks and are willing to do something about it.

AM I AT RISK?

It depends on your risk factors. Risk factors include, smoking, high blood pressure, family history of early heart disease (heart disease in father or brother before age 55; heart disease in mother or sister before age 65), low HDL cholesterol, and age (men 45 years or older; women 55 years or older).

Unhealthy cholesterol levels can be lowered by changing what you eat and how much you exercise. This will lower your chance of a heart attack or stroke!

DIET The best diet is low in saturated fat and high in fiber. This is a diet that includes lots of vegetables, fruits, 100% whole grains, beans, nuts and fish. LDL cholesterol comes



from saturated fat. Saturated fats are found mainly in animal fats such as meat and dairy, especially darker meats, cheese, and whole milk. Trans (hydrogenated) fats found in many baked products and packaged foods are also unhealthy.

WEIGHT Maintaining a healthy weight, or losing weight if you are overweight, can help lower your LDL (unhealthy) cholesterol and triglyceride levels and increase your HDL (healthy) cholesterol.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY Regular physical activity can help lower LDL (unhealthy) cholesterol and raise HDL (healthy) cholesterol levels. It also helps you lose weight. You should try to be physically active for at least 30 minutes on most, if not all, days.

UNCHANGABLE FACTORS THAT CAN AFFECT CHOLESTEROL

AGE AND GENDER As women and men get older, their cholesterol levels rise. Before the age of menopause, women have lower cholesterol levels than men of the same age. After the age of menopause, women's LDL levels tend to rise.

FAMILY HISTORY Your genes partly determine how much cholesterol your body makes. High blood cholesterol can run in families.