

How can you manage your cholesterol?

Practical tips to help manage your cholesterol

How to manage high cholesterol

In this video, cardiologist A/Prof Sarah Zaman from Westmead Hospital in Sydney explains how to manage your cholesterol levels with healthy habits and medicines prescribed by your doctor.

There is no single cause of high cholesterol. Instead, a range of factors can increase your risk. The good news is you can manage many of these risk factors. Every healthy choice makes a difference. Even small changes add up over time to improve your cholesterol and your overall heart health!



Watch video

Steps you can take to manage your cholesterol

- Take medicines as prescribed by your doctor.
- Follow a heart-healthy eating pattern.
- Be physically active.
- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Quit smoking/vaping.
- Cut down on alcohol.

Read on as we explain some of these steps in more detail.



Scan the QR code or visit myheartmylife.org.au to join MyHeart MyLife - a free support program for people living with heart disease.



Follow a heart-healthy eating pattern

Following a heart-healthy eating pattern can help to manage your cholesterol. Heart-healthy eating is not about 'good' and 'bad' foods or following a restrictive diet. It's about making small changes that you can continue long term.

There are some foods that are higher in cholesterol than others, and some that contain ingredients that can contribute to high cholesterol.

Eating small amounts of healthy fats helps lower the LDL ('bad') cholesterol and increase HDL ('good') cholesterol. For example, enjoy healthy fats and oils like nuts, avocados and olive oil in your salads and meals.



Take medicines as prescribed

Your doctor may prescribe medicines to manage your cholesterol. The most common type of cholesterol-lowering medicines is a group of medicines known as statins. They lower the level of LDL or 'bad' cholesterol in your blood.

You might need to take more than one type of medicine to manage your cholesterol. Other types of cholesterol-lowering medicines include ezetimibe and PCSK9 inhibitors.

Some people who have had a heart event or been diagnosed with heart disease might have normal cholesterol levels. Your doctor will likely still prescribe cholesterol medicines as these have been shown to reduce the risk of another heart event.

Follow your doctor's advice and take your medicines exactly as directed. Don't stop taking your medicines because you feel better. They are helping to keep your cholesterol at a healthy level and lower your chance of a future heart attack or stroke.



Be physically active

Physical activity can help increase HDL (high-density lipoprotein, or 'good') cholesterol and decrease LDL (low-density lipoprotein, or 'bad') cholesterol.

Physical activities that increase your heart rate, including strength-building activities, are helpful for managing cholesterol.

Start small with realistic activity goals and work your way up to the recommended 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (e.g. brisk walking) each week.

Aim to do muscle-strengthening activities twice a week, such as bodyweight exercises or general daily tasks that involve lifting, such as carrying groceries.

Speak to your doctor for advice on how you can safely build up your movement after a heart event or heart disease diagnosis.

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