



HEALTH INFORMATION

Cholesterol

What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol forms part of the outer membrane that surrounds every cell. It is used to insulate nerve fibres (and so to make nerve signals travel properly) and make hormones, which carry chemical signals around the body. Without Cholesterol your body would not work - it is vital to ensure the body's normal function.

Too much Cholesterol in the blood, however, increases the risk of coronary heart disease and disease of the arteries.

If you have too much cholesterol in your blood it can stick to the walls of your arteries. When this occurs it is called plaque. Plaque will gradually narrow your arteries and can even block them completely.

If an artery that supplies blood to the muscles in your heart becomes blocked, a heart attack can occur.

If an artery that supplies blood to the brain becomes blocked, a stroke can occur.

Cholesterol is carried around the body by proteins. These combinations of cholesterol and proteins are called lipoproteins. There are two main types of lipoproteins:

- LDL (low-density lipoprotein) is the harmful type of cholesterol
- HDL (high-density lipoprotein) is a protective type of cholesterol

Having too much harmful cholesterol in your blood can increase your risk of getting cardiovascular disease. The risk is particularly high if you have a high level of LDL cholesterol and a low level of HDL cholesterol.

People who have a high total cholesterol level (above 5.5) have a higher risk of coronary heart disease than those with lower levels.

If you have an indicative cholesterol test this will be a non-fasting total cholesterol test. It is designed to give an indication of total cholesterol levels and not a medical diagnosis - if your test result is high you will be advised to see your GP for a fasting test to check and confirm your result. Knowing your cholesterol level is important, as it is believed that nearly half of all deaths from coronary heart disease in the UK are due, in part, to raised cholesterol.

Ways to reduce your Cholesterol

1. Eat the right kind of fat to reduce cholesterol
2. Avoid coffee to reduce cholesterol
3. Choose low-GI carbs to reduce cholesterol
4. Be Active
5. Stop smoking to reduce cholesterol
6. Avoid saturated fat to reduce cholesterol
7. Eat lots of fibre to reduce cholesterol

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