

Cholesterol

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of fat found in the blood which is important for many body functions. It is made naturally by the liver, but it also comes from certain foods we eat.

Why is high cholesterol an issue?

Having too much cholesterol in the blood increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

There are two main types of cholesterol:

- **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL)**, known as 'bad cholesterol'. LDL can stick to the artery walls forming fatty deposits (plaque) that reduce blood flow or cause blood clots, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke.
- **High-density lipoprotein (HDL)**, known as 'good cholesterol'. HDL helps to remove excess cholesterol from the blood and prevent build-up on the artery walls.

What causes high cholesterol?

High cholesterol can be caused by:

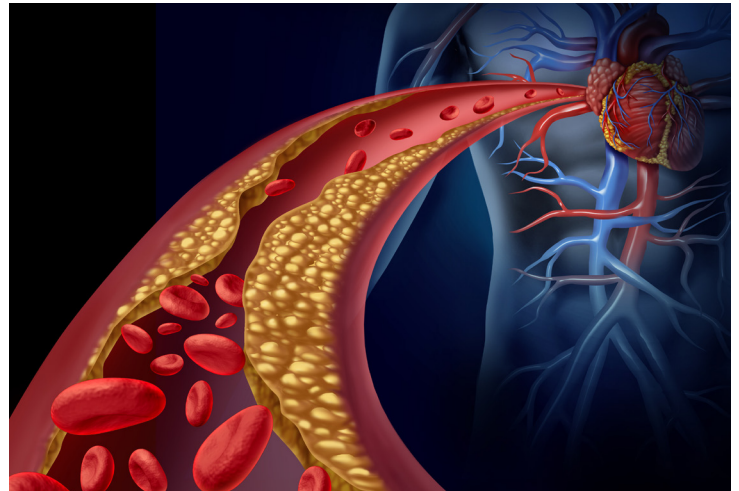
- family history (non-modifiable risk factor)
- lifestyle choices (modifiable risk factors), including:
 - an unhealthy diet, especially eating too many foods high in saturated and trans fats
 - being overweight or obese
 - not getting enough physical activity
 - smoking and/or vaping.

High blood cholesterol and your health assessment

Your cholesterol levels will be checked during your health assessment. You will be advised if your total cholesterol is high ($>5.5\text{mmol/L}$) or if your HDL cholesterol is low ($<1.0\text{mmol/L}$), and you may be referred to your general practitioner (GP) for management.

Your cholesterol levels are also used to calculate your overall cardiovascular disease risk.

If you are at increased risk, you will be referred to your GP for management. If your risk is very high you may also need to see a cardiologist for further investigations.



Managing high cholesterol

High cholesterol is often managed through healthy lifestyle changes. Your GP may also prescribe medication to help lower your cholesterol.

Healthy lifestyle changes include:

- following a heart healthy diet by:
 - eating plenty of fruit, vegetables, wholegrain breads, cereals and oats
 - limiting saturated and trans fats by:
 - reducing fatty cuts of meat, sausages and other processed meats and replacing with healthier proteins, especially oily fish such as salmon, legumes, lentils, nuts and seeds
 - removing visible fat from meat and skin from chicken
 - choosing reduced fat dairy products
 - replacing butter, cream, coconut, and palm oil with healthier fats such as olive or canola oil, avocado, or plant-based spreads
 - limiting deep fried takeaway food and bakery goods such as pies, cakes, and pastries
- increasing your physical activity
- maintaining a healthy weight
- quitting smoking and/or vaping.

More information

For more information, visit our website www.coalservices.com.au