

AFTER YOUR HEART EVENT OR PROCEDURE

HOW TO TAKE CHARGE OF BAD CHOLESTEROL (LDL-C)



 **NOVARTIS**

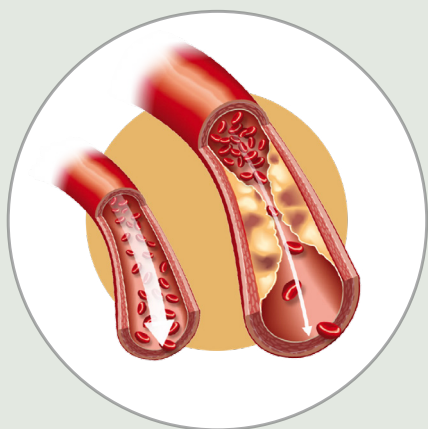


The Mended Hearts, Inc.

LDL-C, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol.



WHY BAD CHOLESTEROL IS SO “BAD”



Too much bad cholesterol (also known as LDL-C) can cause plaque to build up in the arteries, which restricts blood flow and creates dangerous blockages over time.

Another name for this plaque buildup is atherosclerosis, which can lead to ASCVD—a leading cause of heart events, including heart attacks or stroke.

THERE IS GOOD NEWS, THOUGH!

There are ways to lower bad cholesterol.
This brochure can help get you started.

UNDERSTAND YOUR CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

After a heart event or procedure, it's important that you and your doctor talk about what your cholesterol levels are now, what your cholesterol goal should be, and what can help get you there.

It's likely your doctor has ordered a "lipid panel" to measure your cholesterol. This simple blood test typically provides 4 numbers.

Below is a guide to what some of the numbers mean, which you and your doctor can talk about. It includes goals recommended by the American Heart Association for people with established heart disease.

Total cholesterol	This includes LDL-C, HDL-C, and triglycerides	
LDL-C (bad cholesterol)	Too much LDL-C can build up and become plaque on blood vessel walls. These plaques increase the risk of heart attack.	Recommended goals: <u>UNDER 70 mg/dL</u> for people with heart disease <u>UNDER 55 mg/dL</u> for those after a recent heart event
HDL-C (good cholesterol)	HDL-C helps remove LDL-C from the blood and can stop LDL-C from building plaques.	
Triglycerides	These fats provide energy as needed, but high levels can also raise the risk of heart disease and stroke.	

HDL-C, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol.



WHY LDL-C UNDER 70 IS THE GOAL FOR PEOPLE WITH HEART DISEASE

Because too much LDL-C leads to the buildup of plaque that blocks arteries, the lower you can get your bad cholesterol, and keep it there, the better.

The American Heart Association recommends a target LDL-C level of less than 70 mg/dL for people with heart disease.

For some people with heart disease who have had a recent heart event, it may be reasonable to have an LDL-C target under 55 mg/dL.

Be sure to ask your doctor what your LDL-C target should be. Then you can work together to get to goal and stay there.

“*The way I remember LDL and HDL is that LDL is the ‘lousy’ one and HDL is the ‘happy, healthy’ one.*
—Simone, recent heart event survivor”

“*My event magnified my cholesterol awareness. Now I give cholesterol a different level of attention.*
—John, recent heart event survivor”

To learn more about bad cholesterol, visit:

<https://mendedhearts.org/cholesterol-issues/>

KEY LIFESTYLE CHANGES THAT CAN HELP LOWER LDL-C



DIET AND EXERCISE

A healthy diet and exercise can help you reduce bad cholesterol.

Speak with your doctor about ways to include healthy foods and add movement into your routine.

QUIT SMOKING OR VAPING

Smoking directly impacts cholesterol. It damages the lining of blood vessels, reduces the function of good cholesterol, and increases bad cholesterol.

Quitting smoking helps the body start to repair this damage, helping to reduce the risk of future heart events.



“ *I followed a strict diet and got my cholesterol lower. But my cardiologist said I needed it lower because I’d had a heart attack.*

—Cindy, recent heart event survivor

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TREATMENTS THAT HELP LOWER LDL-C

STATINS

In addition to diet and exercise changes, most people with high LDL-C are prescribed statins.

These medicines have been used for decades. They prevent the production of bad cholesterol in the liver to lower LDL-C. Most statins are pills that are taken daily.

NONSTATINS

You may find that even with diet, exercise, and a statin, your LDL-C doesn't stay at goal.

This is most common if you're starting with a very high LDL-C level, if there's a family history of high cholesterol, or if you're not able to take statins.

Whatever the reason, if your LDL-C is not getting to the goal your doctor has set for you, a nonstatin cholesterol-lowering medication may help.

DISCUSSING YOUR LDL-C-LOWERING TREATMENT PLAN WITH YOUR DOCTOR



If your LDL-C level is not at target, or if you don't have an LDL-C target yet, it's important to feel empowered and work closely with your doctor to determine the right goal for you and what you can do to get there.

To do so, be open and honest with your doctor.

BE SURE TO SPEAK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT ALL OF YOUR OPTIONS.

IF YOU'RE UNSURE HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION, HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO BREAK THE ICE:

- What are my cholesterol levels today?
- Is my target LDL-C below 70 mg/dL, or is it another number?
- What changes can I make now to help reduce my bad cholesterol?
- Is a statin right for me?
- Is adding a nonstatin right for me?

“ Don't be afraid to ask the hard questions from your doctor.

—Marta, recent heart event survivor

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