



Life Saving Tips to Control Your Cholesterol

What is the link between cholesterol and P.A.D.?

When there is too much cholesterol in your blood, the walls of your blood vessels can become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits called plaque (pronounced as 'plak'). Over time, the plaque builds up and causes hardening of the arteries (or atherosclerosis). The arteries become narrowed and blood flow is slowed down or blocked.

P.A.D. occurs when the arteries in the legs are hardened and clogged. Blood flow to the legs and feet is reduced, which can cause pain when you walk. Likewise, if enough oxygen-rich blood cannot reach your heart, you may suffer chest pain (or angina). If the blood supply to a portion of the heart is cut off, the result is a heart attack.

When arteries harden in one part of the body, it is likely they have hardened in other parts. As such, people with P.A.D. are likely to have hardened and narrowed arteries in the heart and brain, putting them at much higher risk for a heart attack or stroke. The good news is that studies show that **keeping blood cholesterol levels under control can help people with P.A.D. lower their chances of a heart attack, stroke, and a poor quality of life.**

What are the different types of cholesterol and blood fats?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in the walls of cells in all parts of the body. Cholesterol travels in the bloodstream in packages called lipoproteins that have fat (lipid) on the inside and protein on the outside. There are a few different types of cholesterol and fats in your blood.

- **LDL (for low density lipoprotein) cholesterol** is called the “bad” cholesterol because it carries cholesterol to the tissues of the arteries, causing plaque to build up and the blood vessels to narrow. A **high LDL cholesterol level (more than 100)** means you have a greater risk for P.A.D., a heart attack or a stroke.
- **HDL (for high density lipoprotein) cholesterol** is called the “good” or “healthy” cholesterol. It helps to keep cholesterol from building up inside your blood vessels and keeps them from getting blocked. A **low HDL cholesterol level (less than 40)** means you have a greater risk for P.A.D., a heart attack or a stroke.
- **Triglycerides** are the third major type of fat. A **high triglyceride level (200 or more)** increases your risk for P.A.D., a heart attack or a stroke.

What should my cholesterol goal be?

People with P.A.D. need to **keep their LDL (bad) cholesterol level at less than 100** (or 100 mg/dl). If you have P.A.D. in your legs and your health care team has found that you are at **very high risk for a heart attack or a stroke**, you will need to **lower your LDL cholesterol to less than 70.**

“Very high risk” means that you have P.A.D. as well as other conditions that increase your risk for a heart attack or stroke. This includes smoking cigarettes and having diabetes, high blood pressure, high triglyceride levels or low HDL cholesterol levels. To reduce your heart disease risk and to keep it low, it is very important to control these other risk factors at the same time that you are lowering your LDL cholesterol.



P.A.D.
Peripheral Arterial Disease
COALITION

**Saving Limbs
and Lives**

To find out more about P.A.D., call
1-866-PADINFO
(1-866-723-4636)

or visit

PADCoalition.org



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How will I know if my cholesterol level is high?

The only way to know your cholesterol numbers is to have a blood test called a “lipoprotein profile.” **Your cholesterol levels should be checked at least once a year.** If you take medicines to control cholesterol, you may need to be checked more often.

What can I do to reach my LDL cholesterol goal?

Research studies show that both lifestyle changes and medicines can help to reduce LDL cholesterol levels. Since each person is different, it is very important to work with your health care team to find the treatment plan that is right for you. Here are some tips to help you lower your cholesterol and adopt a heart-healthy lifestyle.

✓ **Eat less saturated fat.** Saturated fat increases your blood cholesterol more than anything else in your diet. Cutting down on the amount of saturated fat in your diet is a very good way to lower your LDL cholesterol. Foods that are high in saturated fat include fatty cuts of meat, chicken or turkey with the skin, 2 percent and whole-milk dairy products, lard and some vegetable oils such as coconut and palm oils.

✓ **Cut back on foods high in cholesterol.** The cholesterol in the foods you eat raises the cholesterol level in your blood — but not as much as saturated fat. Both often are found in the same foods. These include foods such as egg yolks, high-fat meat and poultry, liver and other organ meats, and high-fat dairy products such as whole milk. By cutting down on your intake of foods high in saturated fat, you also will help reduce your intake of cholesterol.

✓ **Eat more fiber.** High fiber foods can help lower your cholesterol and are good for your digestive tract. They are a good food choice if you need to lose weight since they help you feel full on fewer calories. Increase your intake of foods that are high in soluble

fiber. Choose breakfast cereals such as oatmeal and oat bran. Add fruits such as bananas, berries, and sliced peaches or apples to your cereal and eat them as snacks. Add lentils, peas and beans — black, kidney, white, pinto or other types — to salads or eat them as a main dish a few times each week.

✓ **Get more physical activity.** Ask your health care team for help on starting a new routine. Work up to at least 30 minutes of brisk walking on a treadmill or go for walks outside at least 5 days a week. If you are just starting out, begin with 5 minutes a day and add 5 minutes more each week.

✓ **Control your weight.** Losing weight if you are overweight can help lower LDL cholesterol. The best way to lose weight, or control your weight, is to move more and eat less. Cut down on high-calorie and high-fat foods. Limit portion sizes. Be as active as you can throughout the day. To lose weight, eat only as many calories as you will burn.

✓ **Quit smoking.** Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to lower your chances of a heart attack or stroke. Ask your health care team about how they can help you quit. Set a quit date and stick to it.

✓ **Take medicines as prescribed.** There are several types of medicines to control your LDL cholesterol. These include statins, fibrates (or fibric acid derivatives), nicotinic acid (also called niacin), cholesterol absorption inhibitors and bile acid sequestrants. Your health care team will prescribe the right medicine, or maybe even more than one, that works for you. If you need medicine to lower your cholesterol, make sure you understand what it is for and how and when to take it. Be sure to take the medicine as prescribed and if you have side effects, talk to your health care team about other options.



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Tips to
Control Your
Cholesterol**



**Saving Limbs
and Lives**

The **P.A.D. Coalition** has united over 80 medical and vascular organizations to work together to improve the health and health care of people with P.A.D.

To find out more about P.A.D., call **1-866-PADINFO** (1-866-723-4636)

or visit **PADCoalition.org**

**Action Plan for
Heart-Healthy Eating**

- I will cut back on eating saturated fats that are found in fatty meats, poultry skin, butter, 2 percent or whole milk, ice cream, cheese, stick margarine, palm oil, coconut oil, hydrogenated oils, lard and shortening.
- I will choose lean meats such as flank steak or chuck roast and meat substitutes such as chicken without the skin, boiled ham or pork tenderloin.
- I will switch to low-fat (1 percent) or fat-free dairy products such as low-fat cheese, sour cream, yogurt and skim milk.
- I will cut back on foods that are high in cholesterol such as egg yolks, high-fat meat and poultry, liver and other organ meats, and high-fat dairy products.
- I will choose the types of fat that can protect my heart such as olive oil, canola oil, corn oil, sunflower and safflower oils, and cholesterol-lowering margarines.
- I will eat fish 2 or 3 times a week, choosing those that are high in fat that will protect my heart such as albacore tuna, herring, mackerel, rainbow trout, sardines and salmon.

**My Life Saving Plan to Lower
LDL Cholesterol**

Write down three reasons you want to lower your LDL cholesterol.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write down three things you will do right away to lower your LDL cholesterol level.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write down the people who can help you lower your LDL cholesterol level (for example, your husband or wife, a friend, or your health care team):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Remember: Finding and treating P.A.D. early can help keep your legs healthy, lower your risk for heart attack or stroke, and save your life and limbs.

Types of Cholesterol	Targets	My Targets	My Results
LDL cholesterol	Below 100 mg/dl		
HDL cholesterol	Above 40 mg/dl (for men)		
	Above 50 mg/dl (for women)		
Triglycerides	Below 150 mg/dl		

For more information on controlling cholesterol, contact:

American Heart Association 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute 301-592-8573 or 240-629-3255 (TTY)

Adapted from publications of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health and the American Diabetes Association

