

## Reduce your Risk of High Cholesterol by Eating Better

It isn't always easy to get portion sizes right, and it can make managing your weight and blood glucose levels more difficult. It is good to stay clued up on carb portion sizes. We've created a guide with some tips and tricks to help you along the way.

### Get your portion sizes right

Using everyday items and household utensils to get your portion sizes right can be really useful. It's an easy way to visualise what a portion should look like.

We've produced portion-size guides for popular foods from the five food groups that help to make up a healthy, balanced diet.

Remember, everybody's needs are different so the number of portion sizes you need is individual – and your weight, gender, body composition and activity levels all make a difference. Your Health Coach may be able to advise you on the amount of portions that are right for you.

### **Starchy Foods**

Includes rice, pasta, bread and chapattis for energy. Choose wholegrain where possible. One portion is:

- Cooked rice = 2 heaped tablespoons
- Half a jacket potato = 1 computer mouse
- Breakfast cereal = 3 tablespoons
- Boiled pasta or cooked noodles = 3 heaped tablespoons



### **Dairy food**

Includes milk, cheese and yoghurt for calcium, which is essential for strong bones and teeth. One portion is:

- Semi or skimmed milk = one medium glass (200mls or 1/3 pint)
- Hard cheese = small matchbox (30g)
- Reduced or low-fat cream cheese = two small matchboxes (60g)
- Low-sugar, low-fat fromage frais / yoghurt = 125g pot



### Meat, fish, eggs, pulses, beans and nuts

These foods are high in protein, essential to build and replace muscle.

One portion is:

- Cooked lean meat (e.g. chicken, beef or pork) = deck of playing cards (60-90g)
- Beans and pulses (e.g. red kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas or lentils) = 4 tablespoons
- Nuts or peanut butter (unsalted) = golf ball (2 level tablespoons)
- Quorn, tofu or soya = snooker ball (120g)



### Fruit

Provides you with important vitamins, minerals and fibre that help protect you against stroke, high blood pressure, heart disease and certain cancers.

Part of your five-a-day plan.

One portion is:

- One handful of grapes
- One small glass (150ml) of fruit juice (limit to one portion a day)
- Two small satsumas, clementines or tangerines
- Two medium plums
- Two tinned pineapple rings or 12 chunks in natural juice
- One heaped tablespoon of raisins, sultanas, currants or dried cranberries
- Seven strawberries



### Vegetables

An important source of fibre, minerals and vitamins, and an important part of any five-a-day plan.

One portion is:

- Three heaped tablespoons of cooked veg (e.g. carrots, peas, sweetcorn, mixed veg)
- One medium onion
- One large potato
- Two broccoli spears
- One heaped tablespoon tomato puree
- One piece of cucumber (5cm)
- Four large mushrooms or 14 button mushrooms
- Three heaped tablespoons beans or pulses (e.g. kidney beans, chickpeas, or lentils)



### **Foods high in fat and Sugar**

You can enjoy foods from this group as an occasional treat, but they will add extra calories so it's best to keep them to a minimum, especially if you are trying to lose weight.

One portions is:

- Butter / margarine = one dice (5g)
- Low fat spread = two dice (10g)
- Unsaturated oil (e.g. sunflower, rapeseed, olive oil) = 1 teaspoon
- Chocolate = one fun size bar



### **Top tips for managing portion sizes**

- Use smaller plates and bowls to make your portion size look bigger
- Weigh food if you find it hard to gauge portion sizes. Foods like muesli, pasta, rice can be difficult to get right at first, so try using the same container to measure out certain foods.
- Be mindful of what you're eating. It takes about 20 minutes before your brain registers that you're full, so eat slowly, putting your knife and fork down in between mouthfuls

## Healthy Food Swaps



Many hands make light work – that’s certainly true when preparing food.

Cooking and eating together as a family does more than help you eat a healthy, balanced diet. It also helps you learn cookery skills that last a lifetime, whilst having fun with food.

You can always make what you eat that little bit healthier without losing out on flavour. Try some healthy swaps for meals, snacks and occasions and you’ll notice the difference.

A healthy, satisfying breakfast can make a big difference. But some traditional breakfast foods are packed with sugar and fats. We’ve come up with some simple swaps so that you can take charge of your diabetes and ensure you start your day the right way.

## **Breakfast**



### **Cereal Switches**

Although the packaging may make some cereals – like granolas and cereal clusters – appear healthy, they are often full of sugar and fat. Instead, why not switch to porridge? Porridge oats or the instant variety are both fine – just avoid those with added sugar, honey, golden syrup or cocoa powder. Wheat biscuits, shredded wheat or muesli (with no added sugar) are also good alternatives. For sweetness, add chopped fruit.

Yoghurt can be a tasty alternative to cereal, but many low-fat yoghurts are high in sugar. So why not try making your own flavoured yoghurt? Buy low-fat plain, Greek natural yoghurt, or fromage frais. You can add fresh fruit and a few nuts, or seeds for some extra flavour.

### **Quick breakfast tips:**

- Switch from white toast to wholegrain versions like seeded batch bread, multi-seek granary, soya and linseed. These are better for your diabetes and digestive health. They're more filling too.
- If you're making rotis and chapattis, use wholewheat flour
- Instead of jam, try pure spreader, mashed banana. Other healthy choices are low-fat cheese, cottage cheese with a couple of fresh chopped dates, or almond butter and chopped banana
- Try to keep croissants, pastries and muffins as an occasional treat. Even skinny muffins are high in sugar and fat
- Use as little oil as possible when cooking. Cook with unsaturated vegetable oils, such as sunflower, olive or rapeseed, instead of butter or ghee.
- Add extra fruit and veg to bump up your fibre intake whenever you can. Add half a banana to your cereal, or grilled tomatoes to a fried breakfast.
- Choose roasted mudhi or chuda (puffed rice) with vegetables, instead of chudha umpa with oil.
- Try roasted methi paratha instead of aloo paratha
- Try rice, besan or oat cheela with dry fried vegetables

### **Savoury breakfasts**

If you prefer a savoury breakfast, grilling instead of frying bacon and sausages cuts down on calories and fat. Try and avoid red meat and instead use oily fish such as heart-protecting salmon or kippers. They're delicious served with scrambled egg, grilled tomatoes, mushrooms and wholegrain toast.

You could also try topping wholegrain toast with scrambled egg or egg bhurji, avocado, cottage cheese with edam beans and tomatoes, or grilled tomatoes and mushrooms.

## Lunch



With a little planning you can look forward to your packed lunches and enjoy a tasty, nutritious meal rather than a dried out sandwich. By choosing something from the four main food groups at each meal you can be sure your meals are healthy and well balanced.

- Starchy carbs (bread, pasta, rice, potatoes)
- Fruit and veg
- Protein-containing food (lean meat, fish, eggs and beans)
- Milk and dairy food (low-fat yoghurts)

### Lunches on the go.

Whether you take your lunch to work or eat on the go, here are some top swaps and ideas for healthy, balanced lunches.

- Swap a canned drink for a diet version and save around 6 teaspoons of sugar
- Cut back on fat by choosing baked crisps as a healthier alternative to fried.
- Choose a two-finger chocolate wafer biscuit, rather than a standard chocolate bar, and save on both fat and calories.
- Try a ham salad sandwich instead of a club sandwich to save 135Kcal and 16g of fat. Make your own and cut out even more fat by using less spread.
- Open sandwiches reduce calories and fat by using half the amount of bread and butter.
- Pop a variety of breads in the freezer so you can vary your lunchtime meals. Bulk out wraps, bagels and sandwiches with salad veg. To add crunch, add a few chopped nuts or seeds.
- Pack a few bread sticks, carrot batons, sticks of cucumber, peppers and reduced-fat hummus for a tasty snack. That way you wont be tempted to reach for the office biscuits.

- Fruit is always a good idea for desserts. Try different types to add variety to your lunch. Bring in a few and keep on your desk to help you meet your five a day.
- As an occasional treat – malt loaf, a slice of fruit loaf, scone or teacake could be enjoyed particularly if you know you will be active and do not need to lose weight. These are healthier options compared to chocolate, biscuits and sweets. However if you want to lose weight take into account the extra calories they contain and adjust your diet during the rest of your day accordingly.

### South Asian ideas

Try these simple swaps for a healthier lunch:

- Choose brown basmati rice instead of pilau or fried rice
- Stir-fry vegetables instead of cooking them in an oily curry.
- Whichever type of dhal or beans you cook, it's healthier if you cook them in a little bit of oil that's high in unsaturated fat – such as olive, sunflower or rapeseed oil – instead of cooking it in a lot of oil or ghee.
- Make khichdi with less rice and more mung – and add as little oil or ghee as possible.
- Measure out small amounts of oils high in unsaturated fat instead of ghee when making dough for rotis or leave out the fat altogether. Olive, sunflower and rapeseed oils are good choices
- Use a vegetable-based spread on top of rotis instead of butter or ghee, and try spreading it on alternate ones only to cut back on the amount of fat you use.
- Keep butter off the table, so you're not tempted to add extra fat to daals, subjis, chapattis or parathas.



## Snacks



Everyone needs a snack in between meals occasionally – but, if you have diabetes, you'll want something small that satisfy your hunger, is low in fat and sugar, and will not have a big effect on your blood glucose level.

If your bored with the same old snacks, here are some quick and easy ideas you can put together from ingredients you have at home or can buy easily. They also don't need any cooking.

We've divided them into snacks under 10g carbs and those containing 50, 100 and 150 calories.

If you're trying to lose weight, opt for the snacks with the least amount of calories.

## Snack Swaps

Savoury	
Instead of.....	Try.....
Crisps	Plain popcorn with added spices or cinnamon
Bread and dips	Carrots and celery with salsa or low fat hummus
Sweet	
Instead of.....	Try.....
Milk chocolate	Dark chocolate or rice cakes
Ice cream	Frozen banana or frozen low-fat yoghurt
Fizzy, Sugary drinks	Water flavoured with mint or fresh fruit

## Snacks under 50 Calories

Snack	Calories
1 small apple	38
2 satsumas	50
4 heaped tbsp blueberries	44
1 handful of grapes	45
1 kiwi fruit	42
1 peach	30
3 rings of pineapple	50
1 light cheese triangle and 8 cherry tomatoes	49
30g ready-to-eat partially rehydrated prunes	48
1 rice cake and 1 teaspoon pure fruit spread	49
1 x 14g mini box raisins	45
1 lighter cheese sluice with ¼ cucumber	45
1 x 115g pot sugar free jelly	8

### Snacks under 100 calories

Snack	Calories
4 bread sticks	92
80g defrosted frozen cherries with 50g 0% fat Greek-style yoghurt	93
10 almonds	69
100g carrot batons, ¼ cucumber and 50g salsa	80
Half pot (300g) of shop-bought fresh tomato soup	93

### Snacks under 150 calories

Snack	Calories
1tsp (almond) almond butter spread onto slices of a chopped apple	147
100g 0% fat Greek-style yoghurt plus 100g blueberries	125
4 small (9g) crispbreads and 60g 0% fat cottage cheese	147
25g toasted seed mix	132
1 (25g) slice Edam cheese and 1 apple	128
2 small crispbreads and 1 x (30g) slice chicken breast	116
25g raisin, nut, goji berry and seed mix	124
2 rice cakes and ¼ pot tzatziki dip	115

## Understanding Food labels



If you buy pre-packed foods and drinks, deciphering the information on the labels can help you make healthier choices that will help you and your family eat well.

Labels on foods and drinks give essential information, such as:

- The ingredients
- The nutrients (such as fats, calories, fibre)
- How much they contribute to what an average adult needs each day.

### **On the back**

Information on the back of a pack is compulsory and gives details about the ingredients nutritional composition, known as allergens. 'best before' or 'use-by' dates and the weight of the product. The ingredients are listed in order, starting with the highest-quantity ingredient first, down to the lowest-quantity ingredient last. So, if you find sugar at the top of the list, the food is likely to be high in sugar.

### **On the front**

The traffic light system for 'front of pack' labelling, whilst still voluntary, has been around for a while now and is an easy way to check at a glance how healthy a food is. The labels show how many calories are in the food or drink and are also colour coded to show whether the food is low (green) or high (red) in fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt. The information on the front of the pack also tells you how the portion of the food contributes to the Reference Intake (RI) of an adult. Try to choose foods with more greens and ambers and fewer reds. And, if the traffic lights aren't available, check the 'per 100g' column on the 'back of pack' nutritional pack.

## **Why aren't carbs included on the 'front of pack' label?**

The 'front of pack' labelling is voluntary and only an addition to the 'back of pack' labelling, which is mandatory. Diabetes UK and other organisations campaigned for supermarkets and food manufacturers to have clear consistent information on the front of pre-packaged food. The objective of this campaign was to make it easier for people to make informed choices based on how healthy a particular food is.

The information included on the 'front of pack' labelling is meant to help people, at a glance, quickly decide which foods are healthier based on the amounts of fat, sugars and salt. These nutrients are colour coded based on EU set criteria for low, medium and high amounts. Carbohydrates are not included in the 'front of pack' information partly because there is no set criteria for determining what the amount of low, medium or high carb is in a particular food.

The 'back of pack' labelling provides detailed information on other nutrients including carbohydrates. These are expressed in per 100g so that people can easily compare two similar products. In addition to the per 100g info, many products also provide nutrient contents in per portions so this can be useful for people who want to know the amount of carb they are eating.

## **Portion size**

A manufacturer's definition of a portion serving size may be different from yours. In general, the portion sizes given are suitable for adults over the age of 18 years. Younger children and teenagers may need different amounts. Even with healthier choices, if you eat large portions you may end up consuming more calories, fats and sugars than you need. How much you eat of any food influences your nutrient and calorie intake, so think about the portion size when you're buying food and don't always eat the amount the manufacturer recommends if you think you need less.

## **What else?**

Many of the claims made on food packaging, such as fat free or low fat, can be confusing.

Here's the difference:

- **Fat free:** has to have no fat, but check the ingredients list for added sugar, which are often used to replace the fat.
- **Sugar free:** check the ingredients list for fats which may replace the sugar.
- **Low fat:** the product has 3g or less of fat per 100g
- **Low sugar:** has less than 5g of sugar per 100g
- **No added sugar:** although no sugar is added, there may be naturally occurring sugar in the food.
- **Reduced fat or sugar:** contains at least 30% less fat or sugar than the standard version of the product. This doesn't necessarily mean it's healthy and

in some cases the light version of, say, crisps, can contain the amount of calories and fat as the standard version of another brand.

### **And if there's no nutritional info?**

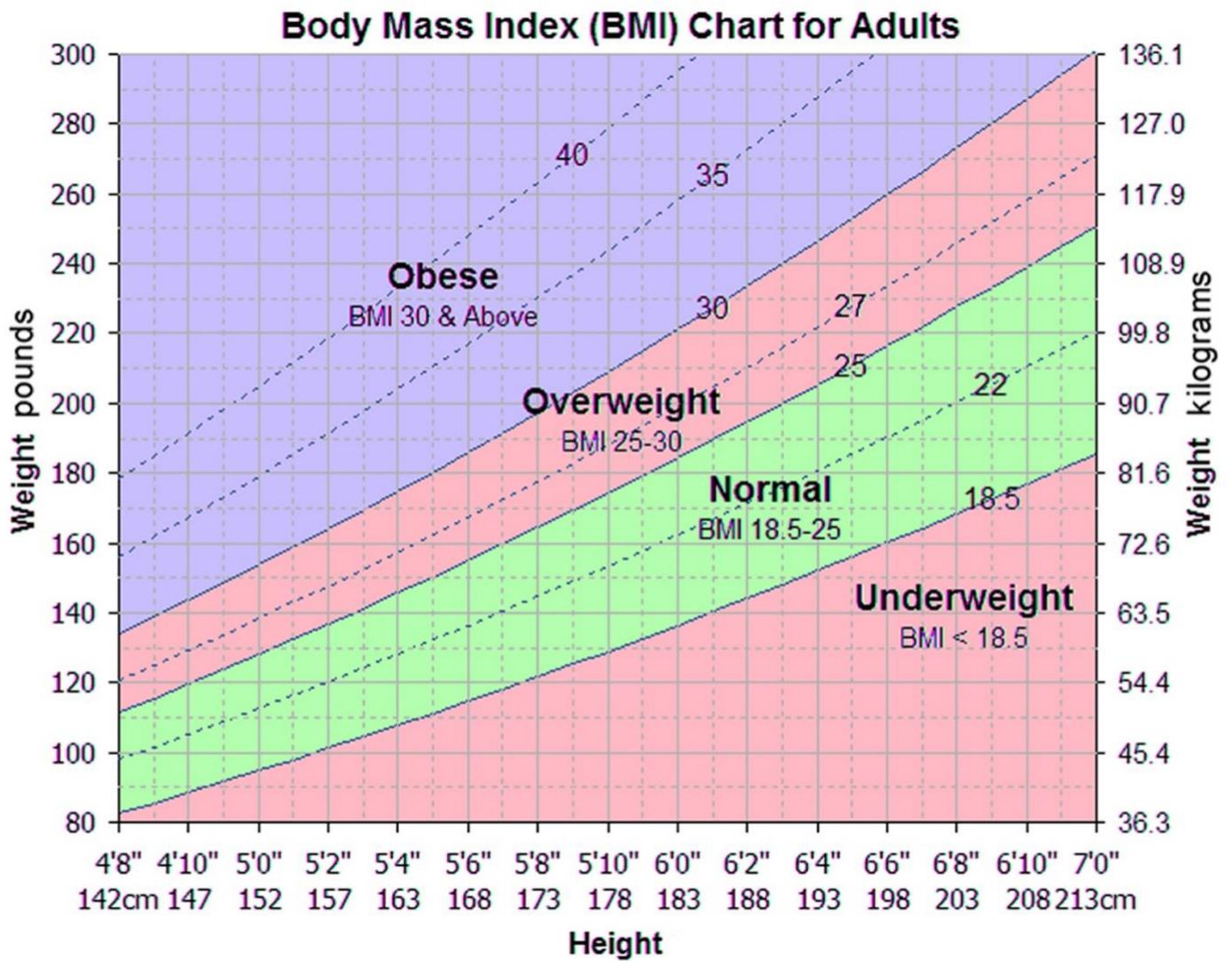
Not everything you buy will have nutritional information, but that doesn't mean the rest of the pack doesn't give you clues to help you make a healthier choice. It's important to check the ingredients list or back of pack label so you can compare two products like for like per 100g.

### **6 ways to be label savvy**

Follow these tips to become expert at deciphering labels in minutes:

1. With traffic light labels, go for green, occasionally amber, and red only as a treat.
2. Reference intake (RI) percentages are given per portion, and indicate how much the portion contributes to the amount of calories, fat, sugars, and salt an average adult should have each day. Check how much of the pack counts as a portion to avoid consuming more calories, fat and sugar than you need.
3. All carbohydrates raise blood glucose levels. Labels on the front don't include the amount of carbs, so check the label on the pack for the total carbohydrate, which includes carbohydrates from starchy food as well as sugars.
4. The figures for sugars on traffic lights are for total sugars, which doesn't tell you how much of the sugar comes from natural sources, such as fructose and how much is added, such as sucrose or glucose. Check the ingredients list – if syrup, invert, cane sugar, molasses or anything ending in 'ose' is within the first three ingredients, this suggests the food contains more added sugar. Choose an alternative if possible, or be mindful of the portion you eat.
5. Check the fibre content on the back of pack label. If you're choosing between two similar products and one has more fibre, choose that, as we should all be consuming more fibre as part of our daily diet.
6. Check the manufacturers definition of a portion size. It may differ from yours and be smaller than you would like! However, if you are trying to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, it's a good idea to reduce your portions.

## Body Mass Index Chart for Adults



# **Moving more to reduce your risk of High Cholesterol.**

**Spending less time sitting down and more time being active is key to preventing high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease.**

It could be an activity class, a sport, or it could be getting up from your seat and doing more around the house. Even moving a little more makes a big difference.

Moving more each day will help you lose weight and help to maintain a healthy weight. This is so important as being overweight is a **key risk factor** for high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease.

Moving more will help you to:

- Reduce your waist size
- Reduce your blood pressure
- Manage stress and help you sleep

## **How much activity?**

You should aim to do 30 minutes of moderate activity, five days a week. Or 15 minutes of vigorous activity five days a week.

- Moderate activity means your breathing is increased, but you are still able to talk. It's things like walking quickly, cycling on flat ground or a leisurely swim.
- Vigorous activity means your breathing is fast and you have difficulty talking. It's things like running, cycling fast or up hills, or fast swimming.

You should also try to fit in activities that improve your muscle strength two or more days a week. That's things like heavy gardening, carrying the shopping or a bit of yoga.

We know that this can be a big challenge. So break the time into smaller chunks and build up to this amount. Walking can a great way to start and it's something you can build into your everyday routine – it is also free.

Think about taking the stairs instead of the lift, get off the bus a stop earlier or join a walking group.

## **Where to start?**



Being more active often conjures up images of gym memberships, long-distance runs and intense aerobics. But the great news is that you can become more active by making small changes to your lifestyle – you can fit it around your daily life, in your budget. Follow our three top tips to help make your life more active:

**1. Set clear goals to move more**

Setting goals can help you break down what you need to do and how to do it. Keep an activity diary to see how active you are at the moment and use it to gradually increase your activity levels. Our action plan can help you set some goals

**2. Plan ahead**

We all have busy lives, so try to plan what activity you're going to do this week and fit it around your social life. You could fit something in during your lunch hour or go for a walk to catch up with friends  
It's a good idea to think about anything that might stop you from doing what you've planned, like bad weather, and having a plan B ready just in case.

**3. Start by making small changes**

It's time to put your plan into action. Start small and do something you enjoy. Doing just a little bit more each day will still make a difference. It also means you're more likely to stick to it and the change won't be such a shock to your daily routine.

Each healthy choice you make is helping you to achieve your goal. If you find it hard, don't give up – start again tomorrow!

## **Get Support**

You're not alone in this. Contact our Health Coach about local services to help you move more.

Here are some handy tools to help get you moving:

- Get running in no time with the Couch to 5K app
- Up your game with this 12 week fitness plan  
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/12-week-weight-management-programme>
- Don't have much time? Even 10 minutes of brisk walking can make a big difference to your health – get started with Active 10

Getting active with others can often give you that extra bit of motivation you need. Whether that's friends and family, or a local walking group. You could even sign up to one of Diabetes UK fundraising events together, like Swim22 or take on Diabetes UK 1 million Step Challenge.

# High Cholesterol Information Leaflet

Dear Patient,

## **You have been identified as having high cholesterol**

This may have been from a recent blood test or one that you have had done previously.

### **What is the reason?**

Cholesterol is a fat chemical (lipid) that is made in the cells of the body. Many different cells make cholesterol but cells in the liver make about 25% of the total. You need some cholesterol to keep healthy.

Cholesterol is carried in the blood by particles called lipoproteins. When low-density lipoproteins (LDL cholesterol) carry cholesterol this is referred to as 'bad' cholesterol. Higher levels of LDL cholesterol in your blood cause an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Some cholesterol in your blood is carried by high-density lipoproteins (HDL cholesterol). HDL cholesterol can be thought of as 'good' cholesterol and higher levels help prevent cardiovascular disease.

Below are the recommended ideal cholesterol levels:

Test	Normal	Abnormal
Total cholesterol	<5.0	>5.1
LDL cholesterol	<3.0	>3.1
HDL cholesterol	>1.2	<1.1
Total cholesterol / HDL ratio	<4.5	>4.6

If you have received this information pack, it is very likely that one of these components of your lipid profile are out of range.

### **What does it mean?**

Cholesterol blood levels are very important but must be considered in an overall assessment of your risk of cardiovascular disease.

As a rule, the higher the LDL cholesterol level, the greater the risk to your health. A blood test only measuring total cholesterol may be misleading. A high total cholesterol may be caused by a high HDL cholesterol level and therefore healthy. It is very important to know the separate LDL and HDL levels.

Your level of LDL cholesterol has been viewed as part of your overall cardiovascular health risk. The cardiovascular health risk from any given level of LDL cholesterol can vary, depending on the level of your HDL cholesterol and on any other health

risk factors that you may have. Therefore, a cardiovascular risk assessment considered all of your risk factors together.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Usually there are no symptoms at all and it is picked up on routine blood tests. It is not an illness itself but it is a risk factor for future cardiovascular complications including:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Peripheral vascular disease

### **Why me?**

To an extent your blood cholesterol level can vary depending on your diet. However, different people who eat the same diet can have different blood cholesterol levels. In general, however, if you eat less fatty food in your diet your cholesterol level is likely to go down.

In some people a high cholesterol is due to another condition. For example, an underactive thyroid gland, obesity, drinking a lot of alcohol and some rare kidney and liver disorders can raise the cholesterol level.

In some people a very high cholesterol runs in the family, due to a genetic problem with the way cholesterol is made by the cells in the body.

Specific risk factors include:

- Lifestyle risk factors that can be prevented or changed:
  - Smoking
  - Lack of physical activity
  - Obesity
  - An unhealthy diet – including eating too much salt
  - Excess alcohol
- Treatable or partly treatable risk factors:
  - High blood pressure (hypertension)
  - High cholesterol blood level, however only LDL cholesterol is a risk factor.
  - High triglycerides (another type of fat)
  - Diabetes
  - Kidney disease that affects your kidney function
- Fixed risk factors – ones you CANNOT change
  - A strong family history. This means if you have a first degree relative (parent / sibling) who developed heart disease or a stroke before they were 55 years old
  - Being male
  - An early menopause in women
  - Age. You are more likely to develop atheroma (small fatty lumps in blood vessels) as you get older.

- Ethnic group. For example, people who live in the UK whose family came from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka have an increased risk.

However, if you have a fixed risk factor, you may want to make an extra effort to tackle any lifestyle factors that can be changed.

It is important to note that risk factors interact. So, if you have two or more risk factors, your health risk is much more increased than if you have just one. For example a middle aged male smoker who has a high blood pressure and a high cholesterol has a high risk of developing a cardiovascular disease, such as a heart attack, before the age of 60 years.

### **What can I do?**

The good news is that if high cholesterol is treated it can help prevent the development of cardiovascular disease. The most effective treatment is LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- **PHYSICAL EXERCISE** – 30 minutes of raising the heart rate, 5 times a week – this can be broken up over the course of the day e.g. two 15 minute jogs
- **LOSING WEIGHT** – if you are overweight
- **DIETARY CHANGES** – more fibre and less fat.

### **How can the Practice Help?**

1. We are offering all our patients with high cholesterol an **ACTION INFORMATION PACK** which has been sent to you.
2. You can make an appointment with our **HEALTH COACH** to discuss the information in this pack and how this relates to your individual situation. They can also help you identify any other risk factors and put together a personalised plan for you.
3. **MONITORING** – we recommend a repeat cholesterol blood test at least once a year to monitor your cholesterol levels.
4. There are some useful **WEBSITES** with more information about cholesterol and cardiovascular disease:  
<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support>  
<https://patient.info/heart-health/cardiovascular-disease-atheroma>

Please do not hesitate to make an appointment if you have any questions or wish to discuss matters further.

# **How Can I reduce my Risk of High Cholesterol and Cardiovascular Disease?**

**You've just found out that your cholesterol is high and you are at a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease.**

Take action now and it will make all the difference to your health in the years ahead.

## **Where to start?**

You can reduce your risk of developing Cardiovascular complications by:

- Eating well
- Moving more
- Losing weight, if you're overweight

Simple, right? We know it's not that simple and we're here to help get you started. Most people know they need to make changes, but what can be difficult is knowing how to do it – especially long-term changes.

Remember, if you enjoy something, you're more likely to stick to it.

Here are some tips to get you inspired:

- Don't forget, you're not alone in this – there's lots of people out there to help you
- Set goals which are realistic and work for you
- Change one thing at a time and make the changes part of your everyday

## **Get support**

Make the most of all the support and services available in your area. Ask our Health Coach about:

- A weight loss programme or group
- Dietary and lifestyle advice and information
- Other local services to help you move more and eat better.

It can also help to talk to family and friends – ask them to get involved to! Eating better and moving more is good for everyone, so you can do it together.