



## TOOLKIT

# You can't feel the effects of high cholesterol until it's too late.

High levels of cholesterol (a waxy, fat-like substance in your blood) can restrict blood flow and lead to atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), which can cause a stroke or heart attack, two of the leading causes of death. High cholesterol is a **silent killer**—you won't know you have high cholesterol unless you get checked, and you can't feel cholesterol buildup in your blood.

## THE FACTS

- ▶ The CDC estimates that high cholesterol affects **2 in 5 US adults**.
- ▶ **South Asian** people have a higher risk of cardiovascular disease than some other groups.
- ▶ **Women and people of color** may be more likely to not be diagnosed with high cholesterol.

## ARE YOU AT RISK?

Your doctor can order a blood test to check your cholesterol levels and [calculate your 10-year risk](#) of developing ASCVD.

**Certain factors can increase your risk of high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease.**

- ▶ [Lifestyle factors \(unhealthy eating or a sedentary lifestyle\)](#)
- ▶ [Smoking](#)
- ▶ [Family history of high cholesterol](#)
- ▶ [Type 2 diabetes](#)
- ▶ [High blood pressure](#)
- ▶ [Metabolic syndrome](#)

## MANAGING HIGH CHOLESTEROL

If you have, or are at risk for, high cholesterol, **there are ways to manage it** and prevent cardiovascular disease, stroke or heart attack.



### LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Maintain a [heart-healthy diet](#).
- Engage in moderate-to-vigorous exercise at least 150 minutes per week.
- Avoid tobacco products.



[Cooking to Lower Cholesterol](#)

[Calculate your Body Mass Index \(BMI\)](#)

[Quit Smoking](#)

[Lowering Cholesterol with Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes \(The TLC Program\)](#)

*This can also help prevent or manage other chronic conditions like kidney disease and type 2 diabetes!*



### MEDICATION

Your doctor may prescribe medication, such as a statin, to help reduce the harmful cholesterol in your blood. These are lifesaving tools that can prevent a heart attack or stroke.



[A Summary of Cholesterol Medication Options](#)

[The Scoop on Statins: What Do You Need to Know?](#)

*Never stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor!*

## PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT



**Read this Guide**  
to Understanding and  
Managing Cholesterol



**Download this Checklist**  
of Conversation Starters



**Review these Questions**  
to Ask About Cholesterol  
Medications



Information gathered from the American Heart Association (AHA), Million Hearts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

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