



CHOLESTEROL

A high cholesterol level in the bloodstream can clog the arteries and lead to a heart attack and/or stroke.

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) is the term used to refer to conditions that affect the heart's arteries. Heart attacks and angina (chest pain) are two examples of CAD.

DID YOU KNOW?

- High cholesterol is one of the main risk factors in CAD.
- Moderately raised blood cholesterol levels double the risk of CAD.
- A high level of cholesterol will increase the risk fourfold.
- Please consult your doctor if you have a high cholesterol level.

HOW TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF CAD

Reduce your risk factors in consultation with your doctor. The main risks are:

- High blood cholesterol,
- High blood pressure,
- Smoking and
- Premature menopause (in women who are not on hormone replacement therapy).

Other risk factors include familial tendency, diabetes, obesity (being overweight) and a lack of exercise.

HOW TO COUNTERACT THE RISK FACTORS

- Change your diet,
- Stop smoking,
- Control your blood pressure,
- Lose weight and
- Exercise regularly.

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YOUR DIET

Changing your diet can assist in treating high cholesterol, but medication may also be required.

It is important to understand how your diet influences your cholesterol level. Some foods contain high levels of cholesterol and saturated fats, which increase your blood cholesterol level and should be avoided. Your daily intake of cholesterol should not exceed 300 mg.

Foods high in cholesterol

Eggs and full-cream dairy products, red meat, shrimps and prawns, kidneys and liver.

Foods high in saturated fats

Animal fats e.g. lamb, pork, beef, dishes made with animal fats, processed meats, full-cream milk, hard margarine, coconut oil, butter, cheese, cakes and biscuits.

Foods containing little or no cholesterol and/or saturated fats

Potatoes, bread, pasta, cereals, grains, fruit and vegetables. Foods that contain unsaturated fats, and which should be consumed in preference to saturated fats, include sunflower oil, soft (tub) margarine, avocado and oily fish.

FOOD PREPARATION

The way you prepare your food also helps to reduce cholesterol levels. Reduce your risk by:

- Trimming fat from meat,
- Roasting, steaming or grilling meat instead of frying,
- Avoiding mayonnaise-based dressings and
- Using less oil or fat.

