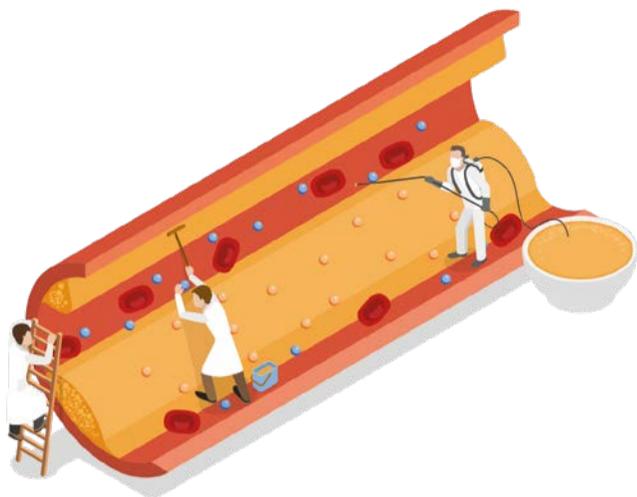


Understanding Hyperlipidaemia



Hyperlipidaemia is also known as high cholesterol. It is a common medical condition characterised by elevated levels of lipids (fats) in the blood. It is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks and strokes. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and management of hyperlipidaemia is crucial for maintaining a healthy lifestyle and reducing the associated risks.

Causes of Hyperlipidaemia

Hyperlipidaemia can be classified into two types: primary (familial) and secondary:

1. Primary hyperlipidaemia is typically caused by genetic factors and often runs in families.
2. Secondary hyperlipidaemia, on the other hand, is usually associated with lifestyle choices, medical conditions, or certain medications.

Common causes of secondary hyperlipidaemia include:

- **Unhealthy diet:** Consuming a diet high in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol can contribute to elevated lipid levels in the blood.
- **Sedentary lifestyle:** Lack of regular physical activity can lead to weight gain, obesity, and increased levels of cholesterol and triglycerides.
- **Obesity:** Excess body weight is often associated with higher levels of cholesterol and triglycerides.
- **Diabetes:** People with diabetes often have higher lipid levels due to insulin resistance and altered lipid metabolism.
- **Hypothyroidism:** Underactive thyroid function can lead to abnormal lipid levels.
- **Kidney disease:** Impaired kidney function can disrupt lipid metabolism, leading to hyperlipidaemia.



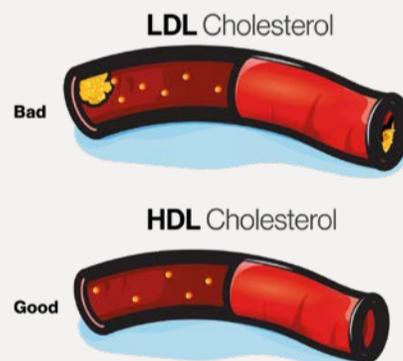
Symptoms of Hyperlipidaemia

Hyperlipidaemia is typically asymptomatic, meaning it often does not cause noticeable symptoms. However, it silently increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases. It is essential to monitor lipid levels regularly, especially if you have risk factors or a family history of hyperlipidaemia. If left untreated, hyperlipidaemia can contribute to the development of conditions such as atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease and stroke.

What are the different types of cholesterol?

A cholesterol blood test measures different types of elevated lipid levels, including:

- **LDL cholesterol levels:** Elevated LDL cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein cholesterol) is the main cause of blocked arteries. In healthy individuals, LDL cholesterol should be less than 100 mg/dL.
- **Triglyceride levels:** This is another type of fat in the blood. Elevated triglycerides are associated with an increased risk of heart disease, especially in women. Triglycerides should be less than 150 mg/dL.
- **HDL cholesterol levels:** This is commonly referred to as good cholesterol because it helps to get rid of LDL (bad) cholesterol. Low HDL cholesterol is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. For better blood lipids, you should maintain at least an HDL level of 60 mg/dL.
- **Total cholesterol:** This is the combined amount of cholesterol in your blood. Total cholesterol should be less than 200 mg/dL.



Management of Hyperlipidaemia

The management of hyperlipidaemia involves a comprehensive approach that combines lifestyle modifications, medications and regular monitoring. Here are some key strategies:



For more information:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25936326/>

- **Eating a heart-healthy diet:** Adopting a heart-healthy diet can significantly impact lipid levels. This includes reducing saturated and trans fats, increasing fibre intake, and consuming more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
- **Becoming more physically active:** Engaging in regular physical activity, such as brisk walking, swimming, or cycling, helps lower cholesterol levels, improve overall cardiovascular health and manage weight.
- **Weight management:** Losing excess weight can help reduce lipid levels and improve overall health. A combination of healthy eating and regular exercise is crucial for sustainable weight loss. Losing 5% to 10% of your bodyweight can improve cholesterol levels.
- **Quitting smoking:** By quitting, smokers can lower their LDL cholesterol and increase their HDL cholesterol levels. It can also help protect their arteries. Non-smokers should avoid exposure to second-hand smoke.
- **Medications:** In some cases, lifestyle changes may not be sufficient, and medication may be prescribed. Commonly used medications include statins, fibrates, bile acid sequestrants, and cholesterol absorption inhibitors. These medications help lower lipid levels and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- **Regular monitoring:** Regular check-ups with a healthcare professional are essential to monitor lipid levels and adjust treatment if needed. Lipid profiles, which include total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides, are used to assess the effectiveness of treatment.

Hyperlipidaemia is a prevalent condition that significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases. While it can be caused by genetic factors, it is often influenced by lifestyle choices. By adopting a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and adhering to prescribed medications, individuals with hyperlipidaemia can effectively manage their condition and reduce the associated risks. Regular monitoring and consultations with healthcare professionals are crucial for successful management and long-term cardiovascular health.