

Your Doctors Says You Have High Cholesterol, Now What?

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**By News Canada**

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Take charge of your health

(NC)—Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance found in your blood and in the cells of your body. A simple blood test is used to measure your cholesterol by detecting the levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL), often referred to as "bad" cholesterol, and high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or "good" cholesterol in your blood. These terms can be difficult to keep straight, but an easy trick is to think of "Healthy" cholesterol for HDL-cholesterol, and "Lousy" for LDL-cholesterol. Your healthy cholesterol should be high and your lousy cholesterol should be low.

What Should Your Cholesterol Level Be?

Your doctor will determine your "target" cholesterol levels by considering your medical history and existing risk factors for heart disease. Existing risk factors include high cholesterol, smoking, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, diabetes, being overweight, being a man over the age of 40 or a woman over the age of 50.

Once your target cholesterol level has been established, your doctor will work with you to design the most effective plan for reaching this level. This may include making lifestyle changes and sometimes medication. Lowering your cholesterol level will reduce your risk of developing heart disease, the #1 killer of Canadians.

What You Can Do To Reduce Your Cholesterol?

Quit Smoking

Many studies have shown that cigarette smoking is a major cause of heart disease. In fact, smokers have been shown to have higher levels of LDL-cholesterol and lower levels of HDL-cholesterol than

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non-smokers. Smoking has also been shown to increase the development of atherosclerosis (narrowing of the arteries), as well as increasing heart rate and blood pressure.

### Exercise Regularly

Physical activity has been found to increase HDL-cholesterol. Regular exercise helps control body weight and other risk factors for heart disease, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Exercise also improves circulation of blood in the body, strengthens the heart and other muscles, as well as increases your sense of well-being.

### Make Dietary Changes

The key to managing cholesterol levels in your diet is portion control. Foods high in fat such as oils and desserts can increase cholesterol more than anything else, so limiting your fat and cholesterol

intake can make a big difference.

### When Lifestyle Changes Are Not Enough?

Sometimes lifestyle changes alone are not enough to reach your target cholesterol levels. Even though you may be eating well and exercising regularly, you may still have elevated cholesterol level. It is important to understand that only 20 per cent of your cholesterol comes from the food you eat and the remaining 80 per cent is manufactured by your liver. If your target cholesterol level is not achieved, you may need the help of medication. Today, the most commonly prescribed medications are statins, which significantly lower LDL-cholesterol and raise HDL-cholesterol.

### What Is The Benefit Of Lowering Your Cholesterol?

Lowering your cholesterol can significantly decrease your chance of developing heart disease. Research has repeatedly shown that a one per cent decrease in cholesterol level can lead to a two-to-three per cent decrease in your risk of heart disease after several years.

To find out your "target" LDL-cholesterol level, please contact your physician. If you think you may be at risk for high cholesterol, talk to your doctor about getting tested and what treatment may be right for you. For more information about cholesterol and heart disease, visit

or

call toll-free 1-877-4LOW-LDL (1-877-456-9535).

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## **5 Simple Steps to Lower Your Cholesterol Level**

**By Frank Mangano**

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You can lower cholesterol without drugs by following some basic steps that will not only change your cholesterol readings, but also improve your health today and in the future. So often we use a prescription drug and hope it will magically cure whatever ails us. The truth is prescription drugs for lowering cholesterol do work. The problem is both the short term and long-term side effects.

Even more dangerous than the side effects of prescription drugs to lower cholesterol is not getting cholesterol under control. Over time, high cholesterol can lead to numerous conditions of the heart and arteries, not the least of which are atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), stroke or heart attack.

Here are 5 steps you can take today to lower your cholesterol without prescription drugs.

**Eat right.** May sound simple, but diet has such a significant impact on lowering cholesterol that it should be the number one factor you look at in determining if your high cholesterol is hereditary or a matter of dietary choices. A low fat and low cholesterol diet is the first step toward lowering cholesterol.

**Exercise.** Improving cardiovascular health is a step toward reversing the effects of high cholesterol. Exercise itself doesn't directly lower cholesterol, but will strengthen the heart and entire circulatory system.

**Quit smoking.** If you smoke, the plaque build up in the arteries due to high cholesterol is accelerated. When plaque blocks the flow of blood to the heart, the muscle has to work harder to get oxygen. This can lead to a heart attack. If the arteries get completely blocked with plaque from high cholesterol then a stroke can occur.

**Relax.** Chronic stress can affect cholesterol levels. If you are constantly stressed and eating a low cholesterol diet, you may not see any improvement in cholesterol readings until you learn to relieve

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stress.

Talk to your doctor. Not all doctors are quick to prescribe medications. In fact, the more enlightened doctors will help you form a diet and exercise plan that is suitable for your current overall health and abilities as a first step toward lowering cholesterol. It is always important to ask your doctor if your decision to follow a specific diet or exercise plan is right for you. In addition, do not stop taking medications before consulting with your doctor. You can lower your cholesterol with diet and exercise, and under the care of your doctor, see about removing drugs from the process.

It does not take long to see significant improvements in your cholesterol. Lower cholesterol can be yours in just a matter of weeks. If you would like to understand more about cholesterol, the prescriptions most often used to treat it, and what you can do to lower cholesterol naturally and without prescription drugs, visit one of the Internet's leading resources on cholesterol:

Frank Mangano is an author, researcher and health advocate who dedicates his life to finding solutions for people interested in reducing their risk of health problems by improving their overall quality of life naturally, without the use prescription medication. Learn more by visiting his website:

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