



## Life Saving Tips to Control Your Cholesterol

### What is the link between cholesterol and P.A.D.?

When there is too much cholesterol in your blood, the walls of your blood vessels can become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits called plaque (pronounced as 'plak'). Over time, the plaque builds up and causes hardening of the arteries (or atherosclerosis). The arteries become narrowed and blood flow is slowed down or blocked.

**P.A.D. occurs when the arteries in the legs are hardened and clogged.** Blood flow to the legs and feet is reduced, which can cause pain when you walk. Likewise, if enough oxygen-rich blood cannot reach your heart, you may suffer chest pain (or angina). If the blood supply to a portion of the heart is cut off, the result is a heart attack.

When arteries harden in one part of the body, it is likely they have hardened in other parts. As such, people with P.A.D. are likely to have hardened and narrowed arteries in the heart and brain, putting them at much higher risk for a heart attack or stroke. The good news is that studies show that **keeping blood cholesterol levels under control can help people with P.A.D. lower their chances of a heart attack, stroke, and a poor quality of life.**

### What are the different types of cholesterol and blood fats?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in the walls of cells in all parts of the body. Cholesterol travels in the bloodstream in packages called lipoproteins that have fat (lipid) on the inside and protein on the outside. There are a few different types of cholesterol and fats in your blood.

- **LDL (for low density lipoprotein) cholesterol** is called the "bad" cholesterol because it carries cholesterol to the tissues of the arteries, causing plaque to build up and the blood vessels to narrow. A **high LDL cholesterol level (more than 100)** means you have a greater risk for P.A.D., a heart attack or a stroke.
- **HDL (for high density lipoprotein) cholesterol** is called the "good" or "healthy" cholesterol. It helps to keep cholesterol from building up inside your blood vessels and keeps them from getting blocked. A **low HDL cholesterol level (less than 40)** means you have a greater risk for P.A.D., a heart attack or a stroke.
- **Triglycerides** are the third major type of fat. A **high triglyceride level (200 or more)** increases your risk for P.A.D., a heart attack or a stroke.

### What should my cholesterol goal be?

People with P.A.D. need to **keep their LDL (bad) cholesterol level at less than 100** (or 100 mg/dl). If you have P.A.D. in your legs and your health care team has found that you are at **very high risk for a heart attack or a stroke**, you will need to **lower your LDL cholesterol to less than 70.**

"Very high risk" means that you have P.A.D. as well as other conditions that increase your risk for a heart attack or stroke. This includes smoking cigarettes and having diabetes, high blood pressure, high triglyceride levels or low HDL cholesterol levels. To reduce your heart disease risk and to keep it low, it is very important to control these other risk factors at the same time that you are lowering your LDL cholesterol.



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