

KNOW YOUR RISK: How High LDL Cholesterol Can Impact Heart Health

Heart health and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol may not always be top of mind, especially when you feel fine. But LDL cholesterol or “bad cholesterol,” can potentially join fats and other substances to produce plaque buildup in your arteries (a type of blood vessel), which could lead to an increased risk of a heart attack or stroke.

It's important to talk to your doctor about your bad cholesterol level, which may be a step in understanding your risk of a heart attack or stroke.



Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) is a condition caused by the buildup of plaque within the arteries, leading to narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can result in serious cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks or strokes. ASCVD includes diseases that can narrow or block arteries in your heart, legs and/or brain, possibly leading to serious problems.

Here are a few numbers and facts about high LDL cholesterol and heart health to keep in mind, and how they might appear in your daily life from the point of view of made-up people.

ASCVD is the leading cause of death in the United States, accounting for about 25% of deaths.

This piece features made-up people for educational purposes. Please consult your healthcare provider for personalized guidance.

Sam, 62 years old

Sam wakes up feeling healthy most days, even though he has not talked to his doctor about his heart health in quite some time. While Sam knows heart disease is serious, he is fairly confident that his daily dog walks and quality food choices keep his heart healthy enough. But in the back of his mind, Sam is not sure and decides to talk with his doctor.

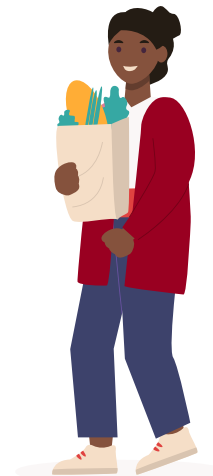
High LDL cholesterol, or “bad cholesterol,” is one of several risk factors that can contribute to the development of ASCVD. Plaques (“bad cholesterol,” fats and other substances) can silently build up in arteries over time, which may increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke.



Andrea's doctor ordered a blood test to check her LDL cholesterol level. Have you talked to your doctor about your LDL?

Andrea, 50 years old

Andrea's coworker recently experienced a heart attack. One detail from her coworker's experience stood out: Many people may not experience symptoms until they have a heart attack or stroke. Thankfully, Andrea talked with her doctor to understand her risk.



Frank, 52 years old

Frank asked his doctor about “bad cholesterol” during a checkup, having heard the term from a friend. His doctor explained that it refers to LDL cholesterol, and is often called “bad cholesterol” because it can join fats and other substances to potentially cause plaque to build up over time in the arteries, raising the risk of an ASCVD event, like heart attack or stroke.

Frank and his doctor are working together to create a treatment plan to help lower the LDL cholesterol level and help reduce Frank's risk of heart attack or stroke.

Lowering LDL cholesterol level to the number your doctor recommends may reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.

As you have seen through these stories, talking with your doctor and understanding your cholesterol level is important. Discuss your LDL cholesterol number with your doctor to know your risk of ASCVD.

Diane, 74 years old

After leaving her checkup, Diane felt empowered. Her conversation with her doctor revealed that by knowing her LDL cholesterol level and other risk factors, she has a better understanding of her risk for a heart attack or stroke. When she got home, she shared what she had learned with her family, so they could understand the importance of LDL cholesterol.



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS.
TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR CHOLESTEROL.