

# Health Awareness

## Cholesterol And You

(NAPSA)—Did you know that one in every six adults in the U.S. has high cholesterol? Or that 80 percent of people who have had a heart attack have high cholesterol? Having high cholesterol could double your risk for serious cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes.

What is cholesterol? Cholesterol is a soft, waxy fat, or lipid. There are two main sources of cholesterol. Cholesterol is made naturally in the body or it can be ingested if it is present in the food you eat. Cholesterol is found in the bloodstream and in cells throughout the body. Although cholesterol is necessary for the body to function properly, too much of it can lead to serious health problems. In fact, people with high total cholesterol have double the risk of heart disease. “Bad” cholesterol is called LDL cholesterol, and it can build up in the arteries and prevent the blood from getting to the heart or brain. HDL cholesterol, on the other hand, is the “good” cholesterol. It helps carry LDL cholesterol away from artery walls.

The good news is that you can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke by lowering your LDL cholesterol. Although some risk factors such as family history, age and gender may impact your chance of having a heart attack or stroke, they cannot be changed. Luckily, however, risk factors such as diet, weight and exercise levels can be adapted to lower your cholesterol—and potentially your risk for heart disease and stroke.



**Changing your exercise routine may help lower your cholesterol levels.**

In some cases, exercise and healthy eating are enough to control cholesterol levels. But sometimes these efforts are not enough, and cholesterol-lowering medications may be needed. Controlling cholesterol is especially important for people who are at a higher risk for heart problems, including patients with coronary heart disease or other cardiovascular disease or patients with diabetes plus other risk factors.

Managing cholesterol with certain medicines has been shown to provide several health benefits, including reducing the risk of a first stroke. It is important to talk to your doctor about any treatment option.

Don't put yourself at risk. Talk to your doctor and take control of your cholesterol starting today.