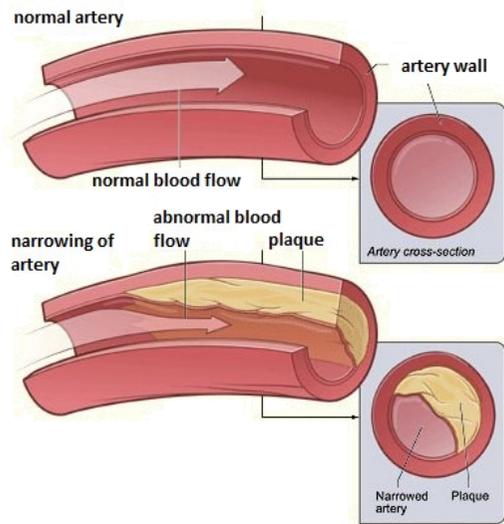


Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy, fatlike substance that the body needs to function normally. It is produced by the liver. Cholesterol is naturally present in cell walls or membranes everywhere in the body, including the brain, nerves, muscles, skin, liver, intestines, and heart.



What are the functions of cholesterol?

- It builds and maintains cell membranes (outer layer)
- It is essential for determining which molecules can pass into the cell and which cannot (cell membrane permeability)
- It is involved in the production of sex hormones (androgens and estrogens)
- It is essential for the production of hormones released by the adrenal glands (cortisol, corticosterone, aldosterone, and others)
- It aids in the production of bile
- It converts sunshine to vitamin D
- It is important for the metabolism of fat soluble vitamins, including vitamins A, D, E, and K
- It insulates nerve fibers



High cholesterol can be caused by:

What you eat.

Eating too much saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol can cause high cholesterol. Saturated fat and cholesterol are in foods that come from animals, such as meats, whole milk, egg yolks, butter, and cheese. Trans fat is found in fried foods and packaged foods, such as cookies, crackers, and chips.

Your weight.

Being overweight may increase triglycerides and decrease HDL (good cholesterol).

Your activity level.

Lack of physical activity can lower your HDL.

Your age and gender.

After you reach age 20, your cholesterol naturally begins to rise. In men, cholesterol generally levels off after age 50. In women, it stays fairly low until menopause. Then it rises to about the same level as in men.

Some diseases.

Certain diseases may raise your risk of high cholesterol. These include hypothyroidism, chronic kidney disease, and other kidney problems.

Your family history.

High cholesterol may run in your family. If family members have or had high cholesterol, you may also have it.

Cigarette smoking.

Smoking can lower your HDL cholesterol.

Certain medicines. Some medicines can raise triglyceride levels and lower HDL (good) cholesterol levels. These medicines include thiazide diuretics, beta-blockers, estrogen, and corticosteroids.

High Cholesterol

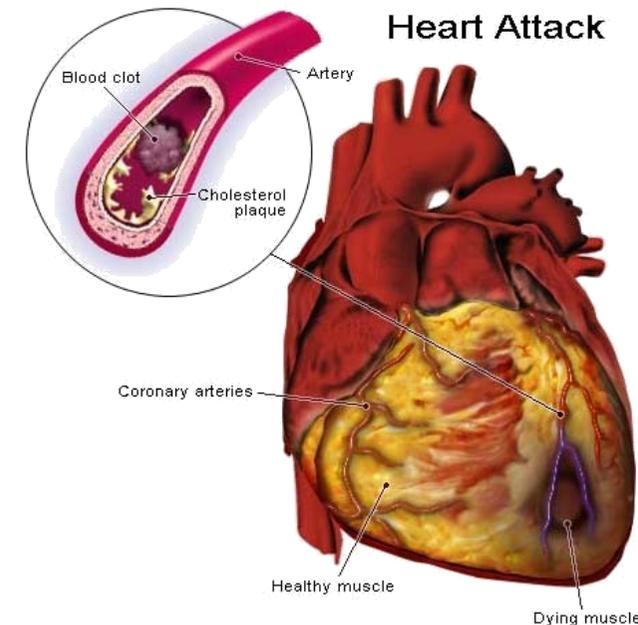
If a person has too much cholesterol in the bloodstream, the excess may be deposited in arteries, including the coronary arteries of the heart, the carotid arteries to the brain, and the arteries that supply blood to the legs.

Cholesterol deposits are a component of the plaques that cause narrowing and blockage of the arteries which cause bad blood circulation.

Effects of High Cholesterol

Having high LDL cholesterol or having low HDL cholesterol can lead to the buildup of plaque in artery walls, this can cause:

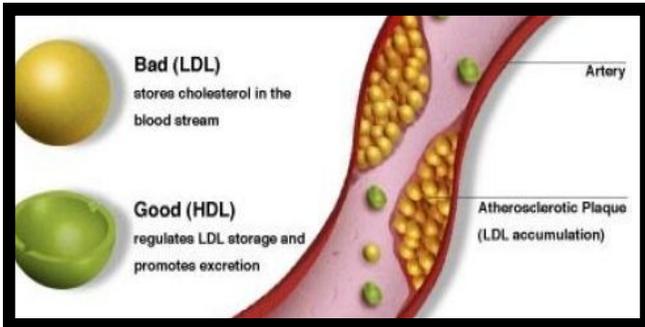
- Blockage to the leg arteries causes pain when walking
- Carotid artery blockage may cause stroke
- blockage of the coronary arteries leads to angina (chest pain) and heart attack.



What is LDL and HDL?

LDL (Bad) Cholesterol

When too much LDL (bad) cholesterol circulates in the blood, it can slowly build up in the inner walls of the arteries that feed the heart and brain. Together with other substances, it can form plaque, a thick, hard deposit that can narrow the arteries and make them less flexible. This condition is known as atherosclerosis. If a clot forms and blocks a narrowed artery, heart attack or stroke can result.



HDL (Good) Cholesterol

About one-fourth to one-third of blood cholesterol is carried by high-density lipoprotein (HDL). HDL cholesterol is known as "good" cholesterol, because high levels of HDL seem to protect against heart attack. It is thought that HDL tends to carry cholesterol away from the arteries and back to the liver, where it's passed from the body.



For General Enquiries

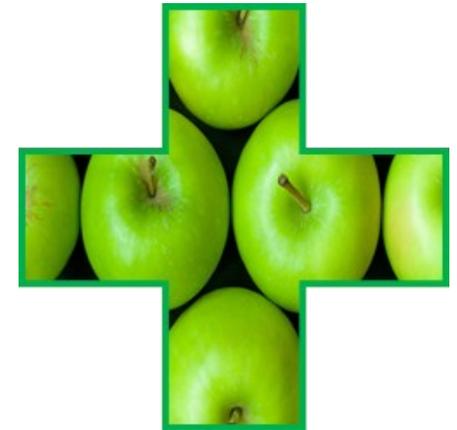
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