

Kidney Disease: How to Lower Your Cholesterol



Many people with chronic kidney disease also have high cholesterol. You can help prevent problems from kidney disease if you control your cholesterol.

High cholesterol can damage the blood vessels in your kidneys and cause problems. And when it damages other blood vessels in your body, such as your heart, it raises your risk of heart attack and stroke.

You can improve your cholesterol level with a healthy diet, exercise, and medicines. If you have high cholesterol, work with your doctor to reduce it.

Cholesterol-level goals

Your doctor will give you a goal for your cholesterol levels. This goal is based on your health, family history, and risk of a heart attack. You will likely have a goal for LDL ("bad" cholesterol), HDL ("good" cholesterol), and total cholesterol.

TLC to lower cholesterol

Follow the eating plan your dietitian created for you. Your eating plan will balance your need for calories with your need to limit things like sodium, fluids, and protein. Ask your doctor or dietitian how you can also add the therapeutic lifestyle changes (TLC) program to help lower cholesterol. Healthy eating is important even if you are taking medicine for your cholesterol.

To follow the TLC program:

- **Eat healthy foods.** Focus on lean meats, low-fat milk products, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats such as vegetable oils.
- **Get active.** Work with your doctor to make an exercise program that is right for you. Every little bit of activity counts.
- **Lose weight if you need to.** Losing just 5 to 10 pounds can lower your cholesterol. A diet low in fat and cholesterol, plus exercise and eating fewer calories, will also help you lose weight.
- **Stop smoking.** Smoking lowers your HDL, or "good" cholesterol. It also damages your heart and blood vessels.

Medicines to lower cholesterol

You can use medicines to lower LDL levels. They also raise HDL.

Statins are commonly prescribed. Examples include lovastatin, pravastatin, and simvastatin.

Your doctor may prescribe other medicines for cholesterol. Some are used with a statin.

Examples include:

- Cholestyramine.
- Ezetimibe.
- Fenofibrate.
- Gemfibrozil.
- Niacin.

Questions to ask your doctor

Use the space below to list any questions or concerns you have about your condition or its treatment. Take this sheet with you to your next doctor visit.

Questions about cholesterol and your kidneys: