

Medication management

There are many different types of cholesterol disorders and many medications to treat them, so make sure talk with your doctor to find a treatment that is right for you.

Cholesterol medications are most effective when combined with healthful eating and exercise.

Statins are the first therapy choice for most people with high cholesterol or those who have been found to be at risk for a heart attack or stroke. Statins block the production of cholesterol your body naturally makes. Statins can help you reduce your risk of having a heart attack.

Genetic influences

Familial Hypercholesterolemia (FH) is a genetic disorder, affecting one in 500 people, that is characterized by significantly elevated cholesterol levels. FH can lead to heart disease early in life, so early detection is key to prevent a heart-related event. FH is a dominant genetic disorder, which means that all first-degree relatives (i.e., children, siblings, parents) of those affected have a one in two chance of having FH. According to the National Lipid Association, an estimated 80 percent of FH is undiagnosed.

Treatments in development: Many exciting new cholesterol-lowering medications are being developed for patients with FH, or for individuals who do not respond well to traditional cholesterol medications. Talk to your doctor to learn more about the treatment options available to you.

Fact:



Nearly one in every two American women have high or borderline high cholesterol.

Role of a lipid specialist

Lipid specialists primarily treat individuals with disorders or disruptions in the amount of lipids in the blood (dyslipidemia). A lipid specialist has received additional training and expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of dyslipidemias, and may prescribe drug therapy, changes in diet, and lifestyle modifications as needed to help patients achieve and maintain good health.

Questions to ask your doctor or lipid specialist

- How do my cholesterol levels affect my heart health?
- What are my treatment options for my elevated cholesterol levels?
- What are some of the side effects with cholesterol medications?
- Would it be helpful for me to see a lipid specialist?
- If I am diagnosed with FH or elevated cholesterol levels, are there any research studies I could participate in?

National guidelines for the treatment of cholesterol and heart disease risk recommend you talk to your doctor to develop an individualized treatment plan.

Additional resources

- www.womenheart.org
- National Cholesterol Education Program
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chol/wyntk.pdf
- www.fhjourneys.com
- www.learnyourlipids.com
- www.thefhfoundation.org