

ABOUT THE BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

As the nation’s heart charity, we have been funding cutting-edge research that has made a big difference to people’s lives.

But the landscape of cardiovascular disease is changing. More people survive a heart attack than ever before, and that means more people are now living with long-term heart conditions and need our help.

Our research is powered by your support. Every pound raised, every minute of your time and every donation to our shops will help make a difference to people’s lives.

If you would like to make a donation, please:

- call our donation hotline on **0300 330 3322**
- visit **bhf.org.uk/donate** or
- post it to us at BHF Customer Services, Lyndon Place, 2096 Coventry Road, Birmingham B26 3YU.

For more information, see **bhf.org.uk**



Find out more about our life saving heart research at **bhf.org.uk/research**

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This booklet is for people with a high blood cholesterol level, and for their family and friends. It explains:

- what cholesterol is
- what causes high cholesterol
- how to lower your total cholesterol level
- the medicines your doctor may prescribe as treatment
- information about the condition familial hypercholesterolaemia.

This booklet does not replace the advice that your doctors, nurses or dieticians may give you, but it should help you to understand what they tell you.

We all have cholesterol in our blood. It is a fatty substance that is made naturally in the body by the liver. Cholesterol plays an important role as every cell in our body uses cholesterol. It helps make Vitamin D and some hormones, and is a component of bile, which is essential for our digestion.

However, having **too much cholesterol** in your blood increases your risk of heart and circulatory disease, such as a heart attack or stroke.

You can lower your cholesterol and therefore your risk of developing coronary heart disease (see page 16) by being physically active, changing your diet, and by reducing your alcohol intake or quitting smoking.

An inherited condition called familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH) can also cause unnaturally high levels of cholesterol even if you have a healthy lifestyle (see page 67) and you'll need to take medications to reduce your risk.

- **Find out about dietary cholesterol**, which comes from certain foods such as shellfish and egg yolks (page 27).

To get the most benefit, you need to be active enough to make you feel warm and slightly out of breath but still able to have a conversation. It's important to build up the amount of activity gradually.

Think about how you can start to include more physical activity in your daily routine; for example, walk rather than drive, get off the bus or train a stop early and walk the rest of the way and climb the stairs rather than use the lift.

**Doing regular
physical activity can
help improve your
cholesterol level.**



For more about how to get more active,
see our website bhf.org.uk/staying-active

