

## Cholesterol in brief (1 of 2)

### What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is the name for one of the main types of fat in the blood. There are different types of blood cholesterol, some are 'good' and some are 'bad', and the balance of these is very important for people with diabetes.

High levels of cholesterol increase the risk of heart disease and other related problems with the circulation.

A blood test taken to measure cholesterol assesses up to four different components: total cholesterol, HDL, LDL and triglycerides. These are described below.

### Total Cholesterol (TC)

This is all the good and bad cholesterol measured together. If your total cholesterol is more than 5 mmol/l or you have a history of heart disease, stroke or other circulatory disease, tablets to lower your cholesterol will probably be recommended.

There is also benefit to be gained by lowering cholesterol, even if you have never had heart disease, if you have high blood pressure or other complications from diabetes and your cholesterol is less than 5 mmol/l. Therefore many people with diabetes will be taking treatment to reduce cholesterol. We know that this can reduce the chances of developing heart disease or a stroke by 25-40% over 5 years.

Individual targets for cholesterol levels will depend on your personal risk factors and you should talk about these with your doctor.

### High Density Lipoprotein (HDL)

This is 'good' cholesterol - high levels are good as they protect against heart disease.

### Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL)

This is 'bad' cholesterol - high levels increase the risk of heart disease.

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## ***Cholesterol in brief (2 of 2)***

### Triglycerides (TGs)

High levels of triglycerides also increase the risk of heart disease.

### Fasting Cholesterol Blood Test

This blood test is done, usually after not eating for around 12 hours, to identify the levels of the different components of cholesterol. It measures levels of HDL, LDL and Triglycerides, and the ratio between total cholesterol and HDL.

### Further Information

If you would like to know more about cholesterol and how to reduce it, ask your doctor for a copy of the leaflet 'Statins'.

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