

# Understanding Dyslipidemia

## A HEARTLIFE PATIENT & CAREGIVER GUIDE



### WHAT IS DYSLIPIDEMIA?

Dyslipidemia means there is too much unhealthy fat in your blood. These fats include cholesterol and triglycerides. Over time, they can build up inside your arteries and make them narrow or stiff. This increases your risk of heart disease and stroke.

There are three main types of blood fats:

- Total cholesterol
- LDL cholesterol
- HDL cholesterol
- Triglycerides



### WHY IT MATTERS

Uncontrolled dyslipidemia increases your risk of: Heart attack and stroke, heart failure, kidney disease, and peripheral artery disease.



### HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

#### A LIPID PANEL BLOOD TEST MEASURES

- Total cholesterol
- LDL cholesterol
- HDL cholesterol
- Triglycerides

#### YOUR DOCTOR MAY ALSO ORDER

- ApoB: shows the number of “bad” particles in your blood
- Lp(a): a genetic form of cholesterol linked to higher heart disease risk



### HOW DYSLIPIDEMIA IS TREATED?

#### MEDICATIONS:

- **Statins:** first-line drugs to lower LDL.
- **Ezetimibe:** helps block cholesterol absorption.
- **PCSK9 inhibitors:** powerful injectables to lower LDL further.
- **Bempedoic acid:** new option for those who can't take statins.
- **Fibrates, omega-3s, or icosapent ethyl:** for high triglycerides.

#### LIFESTYLE:

- **Healthy Diet:** Choose whole grains, lean proteins, vegetables, and limit sugar and salt intake.
- **Stay Active:** Aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week, as recommended by your doctor.
- **Quit Smoking:** Smoking increases the risk of both diabetes and heart failure.
- **Weight:** Maintain a healthy weight.





## LIVING WITH DYSLIPIDEMIA

- Take medicines exactly as prescribed.
- Track your numbers over time.
- Remember: cholesterol management is about long-term heart health, not just a lab test.
- Support is available — you are not alone.



## KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What are my cholesterol and triglyceride numbers, and what should my goals be?

Do I need medication in addition to lifestyle changes?

How often should I have my blood checked?  
Should I be tested for ApoB or Lp(a)?

What symptoms should I watch for?

## Take Action Today!

Advocating for your heart health starts with understanding dyslipidemia. Learn what your cholesterol numbers mean, follow your treatment plan, and work with your healthcare team to manage your risks. Small, consistent steps can make a big difference for your long-term heart health.



### HEARTLIFE ACADEMY

For more information on dyslipidemia and other support please visit us at [heartlife.ca/academy/](https://heartlife.ca/academy/)



## HeartLife FOUNDATION

Canada's patient-led heart disease charity  
"It's About Life, Not Failure™"



join us at [heartlife.ca](https://heartlife.ca)

## Our Mission

The HeartLife Foundation is a patient-driven charity whose mission is to transform the quality of life for people living with cardiovascular diseases by engaging, educating, and empowering a global community. We aim to create lasting solutions, drive innovation, and build healthier lives for patients, caregivers, and families worldwide.