

# Lipoprotein(a) Cholesterol



## Does this test have other names?

Cholesterol Lp(a), Lp(a)

## What is this test?

This test measures the level of lipoprotein(a), or Lp(a), in your blood.

Lipoproteins are made of protein and fat. They carry cholesterol through your blood. Lp(a) is a type of low-density lipoprotein (LDL). LDL is known as "bad" cholesterol. High levels of Lp(a) can create plaque in your blood vessels. This is a buildup of cholesterol that lessens blood flow through your arteries. A high level of Lp(a) can be a sign of cholesterol-related disease, such as coronary artery disease. Research has found it to be an independent risk factor for heart disease. How that information can be used in routine medicine isn't yet well-defined. It's possible to have heart disease even if you have a normal lipid level. You can inherit an increased risk for high levels of Lp(a).

## Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you have any of the following:

- Symptoms of heart disease
- Family history of cardiovascular disease such as heart attacks or strokes
- Heart disease despite a normal lipid level

## What other tests might I have along with this test?

You may need other tests to show your healthcare provider how well your heart is working. These tests may include:

- Complete lipid or cholesterol profile
- Electrocardiogram (ECG) to measure heart activity
- Stress test to check your heart while you are exercising
- Echocardiogram to show an image of your heart while it's beating
- Cardiac catheterization to see if you have a clogged artery

## What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

Results are given in milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL). In most people, Lp(a) levels do not change much over their lifetime.

For most people, higher results are greater than 30 mg/dL. If your results are high, it may mean you have high cholesterol and are at an increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

## How is this test done?

The test is done with a blood sample. A needle is used to draw blood from a vein in your arm or hand.

## Does this test pose any risks?

Having a blood test with a needle carries some risks. These include bleeding, infection, bruising, and feeling lightheaded. When the needle pricks your arm or hand, you may feel a slight sting or pain. Afterward, the site may be sore.

## What might affect my test results?

Other factors aren't likely to affect your results.

## How do I get ready for this test?

You don't need to prepare for this test. But be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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