

## Cholesterol in Adolescents

Parts of adolescent's body are filled with a waxy stuff identified as cholesterol. It helps to produce vitamin D, cell membranes and certain hormones. Blood cholesterol comes from two different sources, liver within the body and food. The adolescent's liver produces enough cholesterol to carry out proper functioning.

The blood acts as the carrier of cholesterol and transports it to different parts of the body. They are transported in round particle form known as lipoproteins. There are two types of lipoproteins called the low density lipoproteins or LDL and high density lipoproteins or HDL. Low density lipoprotein or LDL cholesterol is commonly known as bad cholesterol. It helps in the building up of plaque in arteries and this condition is known as atherosclerosis. The LDL level must be low in the blood and if it is high it must be decreased. Healthy weight must be maintained and exercise should be done regularly. Food items which have high contents of calories, dietary cholesterol and saturated fat must be avoided.

High density lipoprotein or HDL cholesterol is the good cholesterol. It is actually a kind of fat in blood which helps to remove bad cholesterol from the body and stops the build up of plaque in the arteries. The more the HDL cholesterol in the blood the better it is. The HDL can be raised by at least twenty minutes of exercising daily, decreasing body mass and keeping away from food with saturated fat. Some adolescents need to take medications in order to increase HDL. In such cases, increasing HDL can be a complicated procedure and the physician can make a therapeutic plan to increase HDL in the blood stream.

Cholesterol screening helps to determine the cholesterol and fat levels in the blood. Children and adolescents with normal cholesterol level is a thing of the past. Because of the changing lifestyle and junk food trend, even they have a high risk to develop high levels of cholesterol which also increases the risk of developing heart diseases which can affect the blood vessels and the coronary arteries. The main cause of this change is obesity, junk food high in fat, fast food diets, sedentary lifestyle and high cholesterol level in family history. Keeping the blood cholesterol levels at normal is a good way of avoiding high blood pressure and coronary artery diseases.

The blood cholesterol level can vary from individual to individual. Healthy levels of LDL is less than one hundred and thirty milligrams, HDL is greater than thirty five milligrams. If the HDL is less than thirty five milligrams then the adolescent is at a higher risk of developing heart diseases. And LDL more than one hundred and thirty milligrams is dangerous. But a high level of LDL

cholesterol is a problem in many citizens of America. And there is an expected increase in number, the figure is unknown, of adolescents who have a family history of high cholesterol levels.

An adolescent or a child who has a parent having high levels of blood cholesterol and family history of heart diseases at an early age, should take cholesterol test from the age of two. Adolescents who are obese also should have lipid test along with cholesterol test. The lipid test shows levels of kinds of fats in blood such as triglycerides, LDL and HDL.

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