

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that is found in the cells of your body. It is important for the normal functioning of the body, as it plays a role in producing hormones, building cell membranes, and aiding in the digestion of fat. However, having high levels of cholesterol in the blood can increase the risk of heart disease.

Cholesterol can be categorised into two types: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, often referred to as "bad" cholesterol, and high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, known as "good" cholesterol. LDL cholesterol is considered bad because it can build up in the walls of your arteries and form plaques, leading to a condition called atherosclerosis. HDL cholesterol, on the other hand, helps remove LDL cholesterol from the bloodstream and carries it back to the liver, where it is broken down and eliminated.

When too much LDL cholesterol circulates in the blood, it can lead to the narrowing and hardening of the arteries, increasing the risk of heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Lifestyle factors such as a diet high in saturated and trans fats, lack of physical activity, smoking, and obesity can contribute to high cholesterol levels. Additionally, genetics and certain medical conditions can also affect cholesterol levels.

To maintain healthy cholesterol levels, it is important to adopt a balanced and heart-healthy lifestyle. This includes:

1. Eating a nutritious diet: Focus on consuming fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Limit your intake of saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol-rich foods.
2. Engaging in regular exercise: Physical activity helps increase HDL cholesterol levels and can lower LDL cholesterol. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week.
3. Maintaining a healthy weight: Losing excess weight can help lower LDL cholesterol and improve overall heart health.
4. Avoiding tobacco smoke: Smoking can lower HDL cholesterol levels and damage blood vessels, increasing the risk of heart disease.
5. Limiting alcohol consumption: Excessive alcohol intake can lead to high blood pressure and increase cholesterol levels. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

In some cases, lifestyle modifications may not be sufficient to manage cholesterol levels, and medication may be prescribed by a doctor. Statins are commonly prescribed to lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of cardiovascular events.

If you have concerns about your cholesterol levels, it is best to consult your doctor at SunStar Clinics who can assess your individual situation, perform a lipid profile test, and provide appropriate guidance and treatment options.