

Cholesterol Treatment Options

You've seen your doctor for an annual checkup, and found out that you have high cholesterol. Sounds ominous, but it's not the end of the line for you. Far from it, because modern cholesterol treatment makes high cholesterol easier than ever to manage.

These days, patients with high cholesterol have many medications available to them. Your cholesterol treatment options may include over-the-counter remedies, prescription medications and alternative methods. Every patient is different, and not every treatment is best for every person.

Cholesterol aphaeresis is a relatively type of cholesterol treatment. Aphaeresis is performed on the patient when other options like natural alternatives, lifestyle changes or even high-dose prescriptions don't work. Also known as LDL aphaeresis, this cholesterol treatment is a process much like kidney dialysis. The patient will have blood taken from the arm through a catheter. A machine is used to separate plasma from the rest of the blood. While the plasma is being filtered, the blood returns into the patient's system. The LDL (low density lipoprotein), VLDL (very low density lipoprotein) and Lp(a) (lipoprotein A) are separated from the rest of the plasma. When fully filtered, the plasma is then returned to the patient. This cholesterol treatment lasts for three hours, and the sole side effect is low blood pressure.

Natural medicines can be excellent alternatives for treating high blood cholesterol. Most people who choose this type of cholesterol treatment will take a combination of minerals, vitamins, herbs, amino acids or other biological compounds. Researchers believe that certain amino acids can lower cholesterol levels. These amino acids cannot be obtained through food and are not produced by the body. A health food store, pharmacy or nutritional supplement outlet should have the source of amino acids that you need.

If a combination of proper diet and regular exercise is not enough to control your high cholesterol, your doctor may prescribe medication. There are a number of options available, and you should discuss them all with your doctor to see which is best for you.

- * Absorption Inhibitor: Relatively new to the market, this type of medication contains only ezetimibe, and stops the absorption of cholesterol in the intestine.
- * Bile Acid Sequestrant: Also known as "bile acid resin", this medication binds cholesterol to the bile in the small intestine, thus preventing it from being absorbed into circulation.
- * Fibric Acid Derivative: These "fibrates" reduce the production of triglycerides, increase HDL (good cholesterol) levels, and decrease LDL (bad cholesterol) levels.
- * Nicotinic Acid: Commonly known as "vitamin B" and "niacin", this medication lowers the triglycerides and low-density lipoprotein, while increase the HDL levels. Side effects can vary from person to person and may include night sweats, flushing, palpitations, cardiac fibrillations, decreased glucose tolerance, migraines and skin hyper pigmentation.
- * Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty Acids: These can be prescribed by your doctor, and are also available in many foods. These essential acids are widely used for treating high cholesterol and high triglyceride levels.
- * Statin Drugs: This is the most common type of medication. It is prescribed for those who are unable to control their high cholesterol levels by means like diet and exercise.

A poor report card from the doctor # one with a big "C" for cholesterol # isn't necessarily a failing grade. There are many cholesterol treatment options available. Speak with your doctor for the method that's best for you.