

# Heartbeat

## Cholesterol And Heart Health

(NAPSA)—September means back to school, the start of fall and time to check in with your health. It is also National Cholesterol Awareness Month—a perfect time to think about managing cholesterol as a key factor in caring for your heart health.

Nearly 105 million American adults have high cholesterol. That's almost five times the number of people who live in all of Texas or enough to fill the average NFL stadium 1,590 times over. High cholesterol is a leading risk factor for heart disease. Yet less than half of those people who may benefit from medication to lower their cholesterol are taking it.

### Cholesterol And Heart Disease Risk

There are two kinds of cholesterol: LDL, or "bad" cholesterol, and HDL, or "good" cholesterol. Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams per deciliter, or mg/dL. High levels of LDL cholesterol—which is defined as anything above 160 mg/dL (or greater than 130 mg/dL if you have two or more risk factors for heart disease)—can add to the buildup of fatty deposits called plaque. Plaque can clog the arteries that pump blood to the heart. If your cholesterol is high and you also have other risk factors like high blood pressure or diabetes or are obese or overweight, your chances of having a heart attack increase several times.

### Treat Today

There's good news, though. Treating high cholesterol can have

The American Heart Association estimates that a 10 percent reduction in total cholesterol across the population might reduce the incidence of heart disease by 30 percent.

If you think you're at risk, don't wait. Take steps today to help protect your heart. Help reduce your chance of developing heart disease.

- Know your cholesterol numbers and all your risk factors.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get regular exercise.
- Work with your doctor to make sure you're lowering your risk of heart attack.



an impact on your heart disease risk. The American Heart Association estimates that a 10 percent reduction in total cholesterol across the population might reduce the incidence of heart disease by 30 percent.

A healthy diet and regular exercise can help. So can your doctor. Based on your personal risk, your doctor may suggest medication, such as a statin, along with diet and exercise to help lower high cholesterol. One of the most commonly prescribed cholesterol-lowering medicines is Lipitor® (atorvastatin calcium tablets). Lipitor can lower LDL cholesterol by 39 to 60 percent depending on dose. It also helps lower the risk of heart attack in patients with normal or slightly high cholesterol and three or more risk factors for heart disease such as high blood pressure, age 55 or older, smoking, family history or low levels of good cholesterol.

### What You Can Do

If you think you're at risk, don't wait. Take steps today to help protect your heart. Help reduce your chance of developing heart disease.

- Know your cholesterol numbers and all of your risk factors.
- Work with your doctor to make sure you're lowering your risk of heart attack.
- Visit [www.lipitor.com](http://www.lipitor.com) or call 1-888-LIPITOR for more information.

Pfizer, the maker of Lipitor, is a proud sponsor of the American Heart Association's Cholesterol Low Down and Go Red for Women campaigns.

Lipitor is a prescription drug. It is used in patients with multiple risk factors for heart disease such as family history, high blood pressure, age 55 or older, low HDL or smoking, to reduce the risk of heart attack and, along with a low-fat diet, to lower cholesterol. Lipitor is not for everyone. It is not for those with liver problems and it is not for women who are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant.

If you take Lipitor, tell your doctor if you feel any new muscle pain or weakness. This could be a sign of serious muscle side effects. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take. This may help avoid serious drug interactions. Your doctor should do blood tests to check your liver function before and during treatment and may adjust your dose. The most common side effects are gas, constipation, stomach pain and heartburn. They tend to be mild and often go away.