



HEALTH AWARENESS

Watch Your Cholesterol

(NAPSA)—High blood cholesterol can cause heart trouble. But you can help control your cholesterol levels.

“Cholesterol has a variety of uses in the body that are very important,” explains Dr. James Cleeman of the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) National Cholesterol Education Program, “but the body makes all it needs and we should keep the level of blood cholesterol down by making heart-healthy lifestyle changes.”

The landmark Framingham Heart Study, funded by NIH, first showed that the higher your blood cholesterol, the greater your risk for heart disease—the No.1 killer of Americans, both women and men.

There are actually two forms of cholesterol in your blood: LDL and HDL. Too much LDL—the “bad” cholesterol—can build up in the walls of your arteries and form a waxy plaque. Higher levels of HDL—the “good” cholesterol—have been linked with a lower risk for heart disease.

“Where LDL cholesterol does its most harm,” Cleeman says, “is in the walls of the arteries going to the heart—the coronary arteries.”

Like any muscle, the heart needs a constant supply of oxygen and nutrients. When the coronary arteries become narrowed or clogged by plaque, blood flow to the heart is restricted. That causes coronary heart disease. If the blood supply is cut off, it results in a heart attack.

Talk to your doctor to see if you’re at increased risk for heart disease. The higher your risk, the lower your blood LDL cholesterol level should be. You can’t control some risk factors, like age and genetics. But you can control what



Learn how to lower your cholesterol and stay healthy.

you eat and whether you are physically active.

The TLC program—short for Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes—can help you lower your LDL cholesterol level. It involves three things: changing your diet (by lowering how much saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol you eat), doing more physical activity and controlling your weight. Learn more about TLC at http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chol/chol_tlc.htm.

If lifestyle changes don’t lower your LDL cholesterol enough, medication can help. “Medication should be added to lifestyle changes,” Cleeman says, “not substituted for them.”

NIH’s National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute recommends that everyone 20 and older have their blood cholesterol levels checked at least once every five years. Know your numbers. Then talk to your doctor about what you can do to lower your blood cholesterol and stay healthy.