Diabetes and bad cholesterol
Information prescription

Your last cholesterol reading is: Total [ ] HDL [ ]

People with diabetes and high levels of bad cholesterol are at higher risk of having a heart attack or stroke. By lowering your bad cholesterol, you can dramatically reduce your risk.

What is cholesterol?
Cholesterol is a type of fat in the blood. Sometimes it is called lipids. There is good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. HDL (high-density lipoprotein) is good cholesterol which helps protect you from heart disease. Both triglycerides and LDL (low-density lipoprotein) are bad for you.

Keep to a healthy weight
☐ Reduce the size of your portions and cut down on fatty and sugary foods.

Eat a healthy balanced diet
☐ Eat less fatty foods, processed meats, full-fat dairy, pastries and cakes.
☐ Include wholegrains and pulses.
☐ Aim for at least two portions of oily fish a week.
☐ Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit – aim for at least five portions a day.
☐ Replace butter, lard and ghee with vegetable oils and spreads.

Get more active
☐ Aim for 30 minutes five times a week to raise your heart beat. Activities like walking fast and cycling all count. Add some activity that strengthens your muscles, like gardening or yoga, twice a week.

Stop smoking
☐ For help giving up ask for your local stop smoking service.

Most people need a medication to lower their bad cholesterol – the most common is a statin. These have been proven to lower cholesterol. Most people don’t experience side effects. If you do it’s important to speak to your doctor so they can find a medication that suits you.

When is cholesterol a problem?
Too much bad cholesterol in the blood causes fatty material to build up in the blood vessels supplying the brain and heart, making them narrower. This can lead to a blockage in blood vessels, which can cause a heart attack or stroke.

How can I lower my bad cholesterol?
You can make changes that lower your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. The next column explains how.

Blood vessel

Normal
Furred up with cholesterol

When is cholesterol a problem?

Agreed action plan

My personal goal is:
To be achieved when:
The two steps that I will take to achieve this are:
(Discuss and agree with your doctor or nurse. Think about what, where, when and how?)
1
2

For information or support, call Diabetes UK Helpline: 0345 123 2399* Monday to Friday, 9am–6pm, or go to www.diabetes.org.uk/info-p

*Calls may be recorded for quality and training purposes.