



# GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACY

## ASK YOUR GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACIST

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## CHOLESTEROL AND YOU

### **MORE OPTIONS FOR CHOLESTEROL CONTROL:**

There's more than one way to tackle the risk of high cholesterol. Cholesterol is a type of fat that can clog up your arteries and block blood flow.

### **CHECK IT OUT:**

If you are not tested, you can't be certain about your risk for high cholesterol. Remember, several people have high blood pressure and don't even know it. Yes, you might be in good company being in the dark. But, no, ignorance is not bliss.

If you haven't had a recent cholesterol test, why not schedule one now? You can do it in honor of National Cholesterol Education Month. Meanwhile, check out a few findings about cholesterol control.

### **FITNESS PAYS OFF:**

You probably know that eating too much saturated fat and trans fat can raise your cholesterol. Likewise, being overweight can lower the level of your "good" (HDL) cholesterol. But did you know that being inactive could literally be the "kiss of death?"

Exercise can lower your risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and stress. Now, a long-term fitness study shows that fitness may delay normal age-related increase in cholesterol levels by up to 15 years! The study ran from 1970 to 2006 and included just over 11,400 men, aged 20 to 90. Although the study included only men, the researchers believe the results would be similar for women.

### **DRUGS TOUGH ON LDL:**

There's a new kid on the cholesterol-control block. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) just approved alirocumab (Praluent) – the first in a new class of injected cholesterol-lowering drugs.

The FDA approved Praluent for patients with heart disease and a history of heart attack or stroke, and patients who have inherited a family condition causing high levels of "bad" (LDL) cholesterol. By the time you read this, the FDA may have approved another in this class – evolocumab (Repatha).

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7500 Montpelier Road, Ste 106 Laurel, MD 20723 PHONE: (240) 786-6045 FAX: (240) 786-6054



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These drugs work by blocking a protein in the liver that helps regulate LDL. They can cut levels of LDL by nearly 50 percent. Early short-term research shows they may also cut the risk of heart attack or death from heart disease in half. Longer clinical studies are needed to confirm the results of these early studies.

Another big wild card? Cost. This class of drugs is expensive to make. It could cost each patient as much as \$12,000 a year. Still, it's encouraging to have options for people who don't get the results they need with statins.

If you already take cholesterol-lowering medications, be sure to take them exactly as your doctor tells you to. As you well know, your Global Health Pharmacist can be your go-to person for any questions you may have.

*Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition.*

#### References:

- 1) HealthDay: "FDA Ok's First of New Class of Cholesterol Drugs." Available at: [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_153763.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_153763.html) Accessed 8-4-15.
- 2) WebMD: Available: <http://www.webmd.com/cholesterol-management/tc/high-cholesterol-overview> Accessed 8-4-15.