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Cholesterol looks and feels like soft wax and is just one of a whole group of compounds called sterols, all of which are essential to life. We take in cholesterol through the foods we eat but we also manufacture it within our livers. It is a necessary chemical of life, helping us to make hormones and metabolic products. However, if we have too much in our blood then the excess begins to line our arteries leading to arteriosclerosis and blockage.

Over 60% of the British population have a higher than recommended cholesterol level. Some people make too much, thanks to their genetics, but the vast majority of people have the ability to significantly improve their levels by modifying their lifestyles. The most important factors are diet and exercise. It is well proven that even a small change in our levels can make a big improvement to our chances of avoiding cardiovascular disease. Experts know that each 1% reduction in blood cholesterol levels produces a 2% reduction in coronary heart disease.

Good Cholesterol and Bad Cholesterol

The story is more complex than just measuring the total cholesterol (i.e. the total amount of all cholesterol in the blood). Doctors have known for some time that the relative amounts of different types of cholesterol are also very important when determining if something needs to be done. In very simple terms, there is a good cholesterol and a bad type.

The Good Cholesterol

HDL (high density lipoprotein) cholesterol is called 'good' cholesterol as it contains a relatively small amount of cholesterol itself and seems to carry away harmful fatty deposits from our artery linings back to the liver for excretion from the body via the gastro-intestinal system. Many scientific studies have shown that it exerts a protective effect and doctors are now beginning to understand that this cholesterol is more important than first thought. For some time, doctors wondered why some heart attack patients seemed to have normal cholesterol levels and recent evidence has shown that these individuals frequently have low HDL levels.

If your HDL levels are low and your total cholesterol is normal (5.2 mmol/L) or above then your chances of a heart attack are higher. The Bad Cholesterol LDL (low density lipoprotein) cholesterol accounts for most (70%) of the cholesterol in our blood. In simple terms, it causes cholesterol to stick to the tissues of our body, including the lining of our arteries where it may actually begin to deposit. If this process continues then the arterial lining can thicken and affect the flow of blood or provide a surface for a blood clot to form. The fat in our arteries is mainly comprised of the harmful LDL cholesterol.

Can we improve our cholesterol levels?

The good news is that it is definitely possible to change our blood cholesterol values and that this needn't be too difficult.

Call Optimum Performance today with your Nutritional goals **07966054419**