



American  
Heart  
Association.

# CONSEQUENCES OF HIGH CHOLESTEROL



High cholesterol increases your risk of health issues like heart attack and stroke, the world's top killers. If high cholesterol is left untreated, it can lead to a higher risk or complications with:



NORMAL  
ARTERY



CHOLESTEROL  
BLOCKED  
ARTERY

## Cardiovascular Disease

High cholesterol is a major risk factor for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, which is caused by buildup in the arteries and increases the possibility of heart disease and stroke.

## Stroke

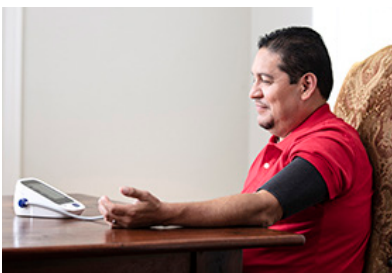
High amounts of bad cholesterol in your blood can block a critical path to your brain by clogging up your arteries. If the buildup gets too high, it can lead to a stroke.

## Diabetes

Diabetes can put a dent in your good cholesterol and increase the amount of bad cholesterol in your blood, increasing your risk of heart attack and stroke.

## Artery Disease

PAD (peripheral artery disease) narrows arteries and reduces blood away from your heart to other parts of your body. High blood cholesterol increases your risk of PAD and can also narrow critical pathways through your arteries.



## High blood pressure

High blood pressure can damage your blood vessels, where the bad kind of cholesterol (LDL) can build up and narrow your arteries. This can impair your circulatory system and put you at a higher risk for life-threatening conditions.

## Lower your cholesterol to lower your risks

Lowering LDL cholesterol will lower your risk of health issues like heart attack and stroke. A first step is checking your cholesterol. Remember lifestyle habits like eating a healthy and balanced diet, moving your body, and eliminating tobacco use can all help you control your cholesterol! Talk to your health care professional about the best treatment plan for you.

***Learn more at [heart.org/cholesterol](https://www.heart.org/cholesterol)***