



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Learning About High Cholesterol in Children

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Cholesterol is a type of fat in the blood. It is needed for many body functions, such as making new cells. Cholesterol is made by the body and also comes from food your child eats. High cholesterol means your child has too much of this type of fat in his or her blood.

There are two types of cholesterol: LDL and HDL. LDL is the "bad" cholesterol that builds up inside the blood vessel walls, making them too narrow. This reduces the flow of blood and can cause a heart attack or stroke. HDL is the "good" cholesterol that helps clear bad cholesterol from the body.

High cholesterol can be caused by eating food with too much saturated fat or cholesterol in it and by being overweight. It can also run in families.

High cholesterol has no symptoms. You may first find out that your child has high cholesterol when your child's doctor does a routine cholesterol test.

How can you prevent high cholesterol in children?

You can help prevent high cholesterol by seeing that your child is active and stays at a healthy weight and eats healthy foods.

Help your child be active and stay at a healthy weight

- Encourage your child to be active each day. Your child may like to take a walk with you, ride a bike, or play sports.
- Help your child reach and stay at a healthy weight. Be a good role model. Let your child see you eat the healthy foods you want him or her to eat. When you eat out, order salad instead of fries for a side dish.

Eat more fruits, vegetables, and fiber

- Fruits and vegetables have lots of nutrients that help protect against heart disease, and they have little—if any—fat. Try to have your child eat at least five servings a day. Dark green, deep orange, or yellow fruits and vegetables are healthy choices.
- Keep carrots, celery, and other veggies handy for snacks. Buy fruit that is in season and store it where your child can see it so that he or she will be tempted to eat it. Cook dishes that have a lot of veggies in them, such as stir-fries and soups.
- Foods high in fiber may reduce cholesterol levels and provide important vitamins and minerals. High-fiber foods include whole-grain cereals and breads, oatmeal, beans, brown rice, citrus fruits, and apples.
- Buy whole-grain breads and cereals instead of white bread and pastries.

Limit saturated fat, salt, and sugar

- Read food labels and try to avoid saturated fat and trans fat. These fats are found in processed foods like chips, crackers, and cookies.
- Use olive or canola oil when you cook.
- Bake, broil, grill, or steam foods instead of frying them.
- Limit the amount of high-fat meats your child eats, including hot dogs and sausages. Cut out all visible fat when you prepare meat.
- Eat fish, skinless poultry, and soy products such as tofu instead of high-fat meats. Try to have your child eat at least two servings of fish a week.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products.
- Limit salt (sodium) and added sugar in your child's food and beverages.

How is high cholesterol treated?

- Treatment includes doing the same things you do to prevent high cholesterol. Your doctor may ask that your child eat healthy foods, lose extra weight, and be more active. See the Prevention section above for details.
- Treatment may also include medicine. If this is true for your child, have your child take medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think your child is having a problem with his or her medicine.

Learning About High Cholesterol in Children (Page 3 of 3)

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter **C369** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About High Cholesterol in Children.**"

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