

## **Script – Print - The Good and Bad About Cholesterol**

### **Exercise and Proper Diet Key to Avoiding Trouble**

Back in the day, our grandparents ate to their hearts' content and no one seemed to mind. There was no mention of possible health risks attached to a diet full of red meat or fried and processed foods. High cholesterol? There was no such thing.

Luckily, times have changed. These days, we know so much more about high cholesterol – the fact it can lead to heart disease and stroke, the risk factors, treatment options and how to prevent it in the first place.

"Cholesterol is a type of fat we have in our body and it's used for many things," said Dr. Mirza Ali Khan, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare. "I know we hear in the news a majority of the time cholesterol is bad to a certain extent but we do need cholesterol because it helps build a basic building block in our body like our cell membranes, our hormones, so it is important to have cholesterol in your body."

The cholesterol in your blood comes from two sources: the foods you eat and your liver. Your liver makes all the cholesterol your body needs. Cholesterol and other fats are carried in your bloodstream as particles called lipoproteins. The most common lipoproteins are high-density lipoproteins (HDL), or "good" cholesterol, and low-density lipoproteins, often called "bad" cholesterol.

"The bad cholesterol is the one that loves to get stuck in our arteries," said Dr. Mirza Ali Khan, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare. "It's the one that builds the plaque we typically hear about. If we have too much of that, heart attack is what we worry about the most, among other things. The good cholesterol helps to remove those fats, the bad plaques so to speak, from the arteries it takes it to the liver which recycles it out of the system."

Among the risk factors that can evaluate your risk of high cholesterol are:

- Obesity
- Poor Diet
- Smoking
- Lack of Exercise
- Diabetes
- Age

The best way to treat high cholesterol is by changing risk factors. Try to incorporate more exercise into your daily routine and change your diet to include more fruits and vegetables and less red meat and processed foods.

"Try to be active," said Dr. Mirza Ali Khan, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare. "I know with COVID people haven't been able to get out as much. That's okay. At least while you're at home if you can break up your daily routine you can walk around your house even for 10

minutes at a time that will give you some type of movement. The recommendation is at least 120 minutes a week of some type of cardio or aerobic activity that helps.”

High cholesterol has no symptoms. The best way to determine if you are suffering from high cholesterol, or if you are at risk, is consulting your physician. Possible solutions could range from simple lifestyle changes to cholesterol-lowering medicines such as statins.

“If you’re confused and not sure what’s going on always ask your primary care provider or some other specialist that you see that knows about it,” said Dr. Mirza Ali Khan, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare. “There are good online resources as well. But if you find conflicting resources, always go to a professional, one that you trust obviously because that’s important and they’ll be able to give you proper answers in terms of what you need to know.”

For more information on cholesterol, visit [OSF HealthCare](#).