

# **Script – Broadcast – The risk of high cholesterol in children**

## **OSF HealthCare Children’s Hospital of Illinois opens first pediatric lipid clinic**

### **INTRO**

[Natasha Noel, MD](#), is a pediatric cardiologist who’s been treating children with heart issues for more than a decade. But in the past few years, Dr. Noel has seen a spike in high cholesterol with several kids she cares for.

Risk factors include genetics, diet and physical activity. Obesity, diabetes and lack of sleep can also increase cholesterol levels. If cholesterol problems are untreated, it can lead to plaque in the coronary arteries, which leads to cardiac disease and atherosclerosis (the buildup of fats, cholesterol and other substances in and on the artery walls).

### **VO**

With those factors in mind, OSF HealthCare Children’s Hospital of Illinois has opened its first pediatric lipid clinic at its location in Rockford at 444 Roxbury Road. The program is led by Dr. Noel, who is board certified in clinical lipidology.

The clinic specializes in caring for children with cholesterol concerns, focusing on lifestyle changes, nutrition counseling with dietitians, genetic testing and lipid testing as needed. The clinic offers in-person and telehealth visits. The bottom line, says Dr. Noel, adults aren’t the only ones who experience high cholesterol.

**((SOS))**

**Natasha Noel, MD, pediatric cardiologist, OSF HealthCare**

“Children can have high cholesterol as adults, and it could lead to early cardiac disease over time. But once found and diagnosed, there is management available. So, I say don't delay (seeking treatment).” (:16)

### **TAG**

Cholesterol and triglycerides are fats, or lipids, in the blood. Dr. Noel says the body needs lipids and cholesterol, but at high levels it could cause damage, especially heart disease as the years go on.

A simple blood test can determine the child’s cholesterol results. It's recommended that children are screened or have their lipid levels checked between the ages of nine to 11, and then again at 17 to 21. However, Dr. Noel adds that if there are specific risk factors, then screening may occur more often or earlier, sometimes as early as age two.

Genetic testing is important when it comes to diagnosing a familial lipid disorder.

**((SOS))**

**Natasha Noel, MD, pediatric cardiologist, OSF HealthCare**

“Screening is needed to identify that something is wrong and abnormal, because most of these kids are asymptomatic. Genetic testing comes in handy if we suspect something inherited like familial hypercholesterolemia. It also helps us guide management as needed.” (:20)

Depending on the cause and severity, the treatment plan includes lifestyle and dietary changes, more physical activity and then medication.