

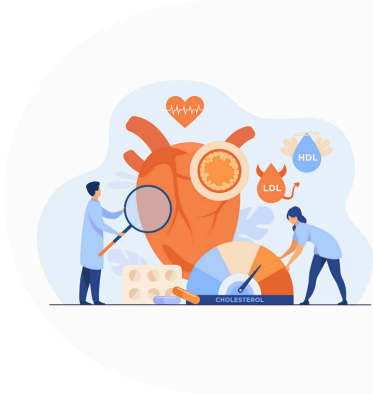


FH Australia
VOICE FOR INHERITED HIGH CHOLESTEROL



Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH)

(inherited high cholesterol) is a treatable condition



What is High Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is important to our bodies and is used in the making of cells, hormones and other essential functions. Whilst we need cholesterol, too much LDL (bad) cholesterol in our body is dangerous and can build up in our arteries causing blockages and heart attacks. In most people, the body removes excess cholesterol from the blood through “doors” - receptors in the liver preventing it from circulating in the body.



Inherited High Cholesterol

Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH) is an inherited genetic condition that results in very high levels of dangerous LDL (bad) cholesterol circulating in the body. The condition causes the “doors” in the liver to not operate effectively to remove cholesterol. Untreated FH can lead to early heart disease and can reduce life expectancy by 20-30 years. Affected parents have a 50% chance of passing the genetic disorder to their children. FH is present from birth; lifestyle and dietary changes alone typically will not lower LDL cholesterol to safe levels.



When Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH) is undetected and untreated, there is a **high risk** of developing **early heart disease**.



Lifestyle High Cholesterol

The major cause of high cholesterol in most people is from unhealthy diet or lack of physical activity resulting in a slow build-up of LDL (bad) cholesterol in the coronary arteries over time. Improved lifestyle measures can reduce LDL cholesterol in the body.



How Common is FH?



1 in 250 Australians



Approx. only 10% of Australians with FH are diagnosed and treated



Roughly 90,000 Australian adults and children do not know they have FH



How Do I Know If I Have FH?

To make an FH diagnosis, the following will be considered:

- Your cholesterol levels - it is essential to know your cholesterol levels from a blood test. Your LDL cholesterol level is the key indicator. A GP can request this.
- A family history of early (before 55 years for men and 60 years for women) heart disease, heart attacks or stroke.
- Physical signs in people with FH can include cholesterol lumps on hands, knuckles, or heels, or a cholesterol ring around the iris of the eye.
- A Dutch Lipid Clinic Network score.
- An FH genetic test.

To have the genetic test covered by Medicare, the following criteria are needed:

- Dutch Lipid Clinic Network score of at least 6;
- An LDL-cholesterol level of at least 6.5 mmol/L in the absence of secondary causes;
- An LDL-cholesterol level of between 5.0 and 6.5 mmol/L with signs of heart disease.



“Testing and early detection prevents early heart disease, individual’s life expectancy returns to that of the general population.”

Who Should be Genetically Tested for FH?

If early heart disease or high cholesterol “runs in the family”, this is the starting point to consider that FH may run in your family.








The earlier you are tested and start treatment, the lower your risk of developing early heart disease.

NOTE: treatment targets for FH are more aggressive than for lifestyle-caused high cholesterol.

What’s Involved in Getting Tested for FH?

- 1 The starting point in the testing process is to make an appointment with your GP for a cholesterol panel blood test.
- 2 If your GP identifies probable FH, having met the criteria, you may be referred to a specialist who can request the FH genetic test.
- 3 Genetic testing for FH is a normal blood test and is covered by the MBS (Medicare Benefit Schedule).
- 4 If your genetic test result confirms FH, your specialist will recommend FH management. Once treatment gets you to target, you may be referred to your GP for ongoing management.

Why Should We Test Children?

-  A child of a parent with FH has a 50% chance of inheriting FH.
-  The condition affects boys and girls equally.
-  If a child inherits FH, it is present from birth.
-  If there is a family history of early heart disease, early FH testing of children is recommended.
-  **Early testing and treatment of children can reduce the lifelong burden of LDL cholesterol, reducing cardiovascular risk.**

Guidelines suggest testing from age 5 with treatment commenced by age 8 if required.



Scan to visit the FH Australia website to learn more about FH and join the Friends of FHA Community.



Patient-centred organisation providing support, education and advocacy for individuals and families with FH.



Raising Australia-wide awareness and understanding of FH.



Advocating for better and broader FH detection, diagnosis and treatment.



Health system navigators for people living with FH.

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