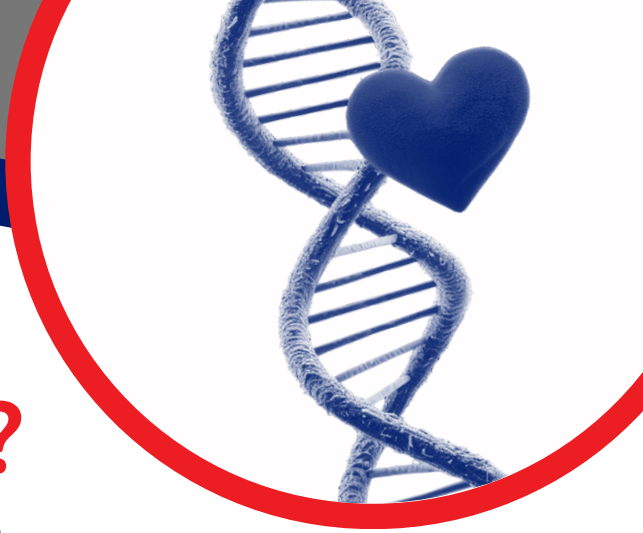
FH Australia
VOICE FOR INHERITED HIGH CHOLESTEROL



Could it be Lp(a)?

1 in 5 people have elevated Lp(a).
It's **genetic** and runs in families.

What is Lp(a)?

Lipoprotein(a), or **Lp(a)**, is a cholesterol-carrying particle similar to LDL ("bad") cholesterol but with extra components that can make it more dangerous to your heart and arteries.

Just like high LDL cholesterol, elevated Lp(a) can contribute to **plaque buildup in the artery walls**, but it also promotes **clotting and inflammation**, which can damage blood vessels over time.

A Genetic Risk Passed Through Families

If you have elevated Lp(a), there's about a **50% chance your close relatives** will too. Lp(a) is mostly inherited, and your levels tend to remain **stable throughout life.**

Why Is Elevated Lp(a) a Dangerous Risk Factor for Heart Disease?

High Lp(a) is an **independent, inherited risk factor** for early and serious cardiovascular disease. Elevated Lp(a):

- Promotes **atherosclerosis** (plaque buildup in arteries)
- Interferes with the body's ability to **dissolve clots**
- Triggers **inflammation**, damaging artery walls

These effects increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, and other cardiovascular problems—even in people with normal LDL cholesterol.

Who Should Be Tested for Lp(a)?

Ask your doctor for an Lp(a) test if:

- You or a relative had a heart attack or stroke before age 60
- You have high cholesterol but don't respond well to treatment
- You have **Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH)**
- You want a **complete cardiovascular risk assessment**
- You have a personal or family history of early or unexplained heart disease

*Note: Lp(a) is **not included in standard cholesterol tests**. It must be requested separately.*

How Do I Get Tested for Lp(a)?

One simple blood test could save your life

You can ask your GP for an Lp(a) test. Although it's ***not currently covered by Medicare (MBS)***, it's available through private labs at a cost of **$A40–$A75**.

Good news: Lp(a) is a "**once-in-a-lifetime" test.** Your levels don't change significantly over time, so if they're normal, you won't need to retest.

Learn More

Scan to visit the FH Australia website to **learn more about Lp(a)** and join the Friends of FHA Community.

FH Australia
Voice and support for individuals and families with FH
www.fhaustralia.org.au
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Learn. Protect. (a)ct.

Lp(a) Awareness Saves Lives

Lp(a) Patient Story
Aged 44

I found out I had high cholesterol at the age of 17 after regular blood tests for a separate issue led to the chance discovery. Because it was unusual for someone so young to have high cholesterol, my doctor closely monitored me over the years and although levels remained on the high side, it wasn't until I turned 40 that further action needed to be taken.

After testing determined I had the symptoms of genetic disorder familial hypercholesterolaemia, (FH), FH Australia encouraged me to also test my Lp(a) levels, which is when I discovered they were significantly elevated. I had never heard of Lp(a) and its implications - it had never come up in a healthcare setting before, my health practitioners never mentioned it as a risk factor.

Since this second chance discovery, I am managing my Lp(a) levels through a combination of medications and lifestyle changes. As Lp(a) levels are largely determined by genetics, ie it's in families, I am glad I am now armed with better knowledge, including that Lp(a) levels are determined by age 5. I have young children so getting them tested to determine if they have elevated Lp(a) is essential to managing their heart health.

Heart disease runs in my family, particularly on my father's side who lost both his parents and his brother far too young from cardiovascular complications. No one in my family had ever heard about the link between Lp(a) levels and cardiovascular disease so I'm the first one to have the test, although it's safe to say there is a good chance elevated Lp(a) levels have been an underlying cause of heart-related health problems in my family.

I absolutely believe routine Lp(a) testing should be introduced in Australia. When I first found out about my levels and what it can mean in terms of heart disease I was pretty shocked, but now that I have this knowledge, I know I can manage it - this should be the case for everyone in Australia who might be living with high Lp(a) levels and don't know it.

Lp(a) FACTS

- 1 in 5 people have high Lp(a)
- By the age of 5 you reach your lifetime level of circulating Lp(a)
- Men, women adults and children should be tested early in life. If the test result does not show high Lp(a) then Lp(a) is not an independent heart disease risk factor you need to be concerned about. For women it can increase slightly after menopause
- Male and females are equally likely to have the genetic make up that determines Lp(a) levels

Get tested young

Lp(a) tests are not carried out when you get a general "heart health check" or a standard general cholesterol test. If there is early heart disease in your family consider getting testing to see if this inherited condition is in your family.