



Should I take statins and be concerned about my cholesterol levels, is a common question..... The short answer is, if your cholesterol is elevated, this is a sign of inflammation. Statins, the medication GPs offer patients for elevated cholesterol, just mask the symptom of inflammation. Therefore, not treating the symptom. I suggest if your cholesterol is elevated check blood glucose levels, thyroid levels, iron and inflammatory markers include CRP, TNF and white blood cell count.

Cholesterol is essential for building sex hormones and cortisol “stress hormone” to support fertility, mood, mental wellbeing, and generally cope with stress. Along with Vitamin D to support immune function and sleep, and bile acids to help absorb fats from our foods and to clear out toxins through our lymphatic drainage system. Without cholesterol we would not be able to absorb fat soluble vitamins A, D and K from our food.

In other words, cholesterol is good, your body needs this. If elevated, lowering cholesterol cuts off our supply of hormones, absorption of nutrients and doesn't get to the cause as to why cholesterol is elevated in the first place.

Most of the cholesterol is produced in our liver and approximately 20%, from our food. Cholesterol is transported through the body bound to transporters known as LDL which takes cholesterol from the liver to the peripheral cells and HDL takes excess cholesterol out of the blood stream back to the liver for excretion.

The whole lipid hypothesis, levels of cholesterol etc., has been linked to cardiovascular disease and medical guidelines just focus on the reduction of reducing / blocking production of cholesterol as the best way to prevent disease. Conversely statin use has been linked to increase the occurrence of Diabetes type 2, due to insulin resistance being triggered by lowered cholesterol production.

Here are some factors to consider as to what is driving inflammation:

- Smoking
- Auto immune disorders untreated and undiagnosed
- Excessive food intake
- Viral load / bacterial load otherwise known as pathogens
- Genetic abnormalities

Cholesterol supports and repairs our tissues, supports our myelin sheaths (essential for neurotransmitter communication), supports our brain cells and generally responsible for repairing cellular and tissue damage. If cholesterol is elevated, then this is a sign that there is damage caused by the above listed factors which if

not resolved, can trigger an immune response. These immune cells are known as cytokines that release chemicals that create oxidative stress and form plaque around the arterial wall which may lead to lack of oxygen to heart and brain and trigger a heart attack or stroke.

The good news is that there is a lot of research behind supplements diet and lifestyle. The Mediterranean diet has the most research. All the plant based anti-inflammatory properties in extra virgin olive oil, resveratrol found in red wine (in moderation), grapes and berries, along with a diet rich in fibre have been shown to reduce LDLs.

**Black seed oil** just two teaspoons per day has been shown to reduce LDL along with a nutrient dense diet in just 10 weeks.

Other nutrients that have been shown to lower LDL, blood sugar, blood pressure and pathogens are:

- **Artichoke leaf extract**
- **Fish oil Omega 3**
- **Glutathione**