

EXERCISING

WITH

HYPERLIPIDEMIA



Hyperlipidemia, which is having blood cholesterol and/or triglyceride levels that are too high, is a risk factor for many forms of cardiovascular disease. Regular physical activity, when combined with a sensible eating plan and weight loss, can help lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Exercise also has a positive effect on many of the other risk factors for heart disease, including high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. The key to maximizing the benefits of exercise is to follow a well-designed program that you can stick to over the long-term.

Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider before starting an exercise program and ask about any specific concerns they may have about you doing regular exercise.
- Take all medications as recommended by your physician.
- The goals of your program should be to improve cardiovascular fitness, increase muscle strength and endurance, improve range of motion, and to promote weight loss, if necessary.
- If your fitness level is low, start with shorter sessions (10 to 15 minutes) and gradually add five minutes to your workouts every two to four weeks. Ideally, you should build up to 30 minutes, five days per week.
- Choose low-impact activities that you enjoy, such as walking, cycling or water exercises. And remember that duration is more important than intensity.
- Once your cardiovascular fitness begins to improve, add low-resistance, high-repetition strength training, such as circuit training.

Exercise Cautions

- Be aware that some lipid-lowering medications can cause muscle discomfort.
- If longer-duration workouts are too challenging or don't fit into your schedule, split your exercise time into two 20- to 30-minute sessions.
- To reap the most cholesterol-lowering benefits from your program, you must follow a low-fat, calorie-restricted diet and continue to take all medications recommended by your physician.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

*If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at www.acsm.org.

For more information, visit www.exerciseismedicine.org or e-mail eim@acsm.org.

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