

# Physical Activity and Cholesterol

This factsheet is for you if you have been advised by your doctor or nurse to become more active to help manage your cholesterol levels.

Use the information in this factsheet with the booklet *Get Active Your Way*. Order your free copy on [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)



## What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of fat that is made in the body by the liver. Your body needs a certain level of cholesterol to work properly.

### There are two main types of cholesterol:

- **HDL (High Density Lipoprotein)**

HDL cleans up cholesterol left behind in the arteries and brings it back to the liver to be gotten rid of.

- **LDL (Low Density Lipoprotein)**

LDL sticks to the walls of arteries causing plaque. Plaque can build up causing arteries to narrow and sometimes block, causing heart disease (such as atherosclerosis, angina or heart attack). Foods such as meat and dairy products raise your levels of LDL. These foods are high in saturated fats. Too much of these fats contribute to heart disease.

# How can regular physical activity help?

Being physically active increases the level of HDL in your body. As more of the cholesterol in your body is changed to HDL, your risk of heart disease reduces. Regular physical activity also helps you achieve a healthy weight.

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## How do I get started?

Use the booklet *Get Active Your Way* to help you make a plan to become more active.

**It is recommended to check with your GP before you start becoming more active. They can help you set realistic goals that take into account your level of fitness, symptoms and medication.**

To get the most health benefits from physical activity, you need to be physically active at a moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes a day on five days a week (or for 150 minutes a week).



### Important

Continue to take prescribed medication.

Useful contacts  
[www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)  
[www.getirelandactive.ie](http://www.getirelandactive.ie)

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Promoting Physical Activity in Ireland



  
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