HeartLife FOUNDATION

heartlife.com

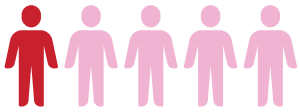
Living with Elevated Lipoprotein(a)

A HEARTLIFE PATIENT & CAREGIVER GUIDE

WHAT IS LIPOPROTEIN(A) OR LP(A)?

High levels of Lp(a) increase your risk of heart disease and stroke because they can cause plaque to build up in your arteries. This buildup, called atherosclerosis, makes your arteries harden and narrow over time. These changes can lead to atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD)—a group of conditions that includes heart attacks, heart failure, and strokes.

1 in 5 Canadians have high Lp(a).



HOW DO YOU GET ELEVATED LP(A)?

GENETICS

About 80–90% of your Lp(a) levels are determined by your genes. If a parent has high Lp(a), you are more likely to have it too.

STABLE LEVELS

By age 5, your Lp(a) level is usually set for life. Unlike regular cholesterol, lifestyle changes like diet or exercise won't significantly lower Lp(a) levels.

HOW DOES LP(A) AFFECT YOUR HEART HEALTH?

High levels of Lp(a) increase your risk of heart disease and stroke because it can cause plaque to build up in your arteries. This plaque buildup (called atherosclerosis) makes your arteries harden and narrow, which can lead to serious problems like heart attacks, heart failure, or stroke.

WHY SHOULD YOU GET TESTED FOR LP(A)?

Most people with high Lp(a) don't have any symptoms until they develop cardiovascular disease. Since regular cholesterol tests don't check Lp(a), you need a specific test for it.

ASK FOR A TEST IF:

- You've had a heart attack or stroke
- A family member had a heart attack or stroke before age 55 (men) or 65 (women)
- You have high cholesterol that doesn't improve with treatment
- You have aortic valve stenosis (narrowing of the heart valve)
- An immediate family member has a history of heart disease

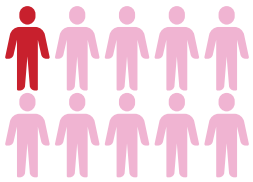
HOW IS LP(A) TESTED?

Getting tested for Lp(a) is simple. Your healthcare provider will take a blood sample. You don't need to fast or prepare for this test, and it can usually be done during a routine blood test.

WHAT DO THE RESULTS MEAN?

Elevated Lp(a) is usually defined as levels above 50 mg/dL or 120 nmol/L, depending on the lab.

1 in 10 Canadians ae affected by ASCVD.



HOW TO REDUCE YOUR CARDIOVASCULAR RISK

Although you can't change your Lp(a) level with diet or exercise, there are ways to reduce your overall risk of heart disease:

- Healthy Diet: Choose foods rich in healthy fats (nuts, fish, olive oil), lots of vegetables, and whole grains. Limit unhealthy fats and sugars.
- Regular Exercise: Aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity, like walking or biking, each day.
- Quit Smoking: Smoking increases your risk of heart disease.
- Manage Other Conditions: Work with your doctor to manage high cholesterol, blood pressure, or diabetes.

Currently, there is no specific medicine approved to lower Lp(a) levels. However, several treatments are being researched in clinical trials. Your doctor can monitor your heart health and recommend ways to manage your risks in the meantime

Being diagnosed with high Lp(a) can feel overwhelming, but you're not alone. Connecting with a support group or speaking to a healthcare provider can help you manage your mental and emotional health.

Take Action Today!

Advocating for your heart health is a journey that takes awareness, persistence, and self-care. By learning about Lp(a), asking questions, and partnering with your healthcare team, you can take an active role in managing your risk and protecting your heart health for the future.

HEARTLIFE ACADEMY

For more information on Lp(a) and other support please visit us at heartlife.com/academy/

HeartLife FOUNDATION

Canada's patient-led heart disease charity
"It's About Life, Not Failure™"

join us at heartlife.com

Our Mission

The HeartLife Foundation is a patient-driven charity whose mission is to transform the quality of life for people living with cardiovascular diseases by engaging, educating, and empowering a global community. We aim to create lasting solutions, drive innovation, and build healthier lives for patients, caregivers, and families worldwide.

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