

Cholesterol can be one of the most confusing health topics.



It's really no wonder. A blood lipid profile yields a lot of daunting numbers tied to unwieldy technical terms like “low-density lipoprotein” and “triglycerides.” It can be a challenge to understand how food, physical activity, and family history influence those numbers. This confusion—and lots of misinformation from the Internet and other sources—surely contributes to the fact that half of adults who could benefit from cholesterol-lowering medicines (statins) don't take them.

Recently, the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology—along with a host of partners—released an update to the 2013 cholesterol management guideline. The new recommendations provide greater specificity about medicines and high-risk populations and continue to emphasize the importance of a lifelong, heart-healthy lifestyle and shared decision making. This collaborative approach can help each of us better understand our personal risk of a heart attack or stroke, the benefits and risks that we may expect from medication, and how to tackle obstacles to healthy habits.

And just in time to help you chart an active 2019 are the newly updated **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**. The bottom line is that *all active minutes matter* when it comes to health. Whether getting active to help manage cholesterol or blood pressure, to quit smoking, or just to have fun, start taking those small steps today toward a healthier tomorrow.

—**Janet Wright, MD, FACC**
Executive Director, Million Hearts®

[Explore the 2018 Cholesterol Management Guideline](#)

Tools You Can Use

Get the skinny on cholesterol management from Million Hearts®.

Million Hearts® has a new webpage on cholesterol, treatments, and the risk of heart disease and stroke. You will also find many resources for clinicians and patients, including a new plain language explanation of statins, “The Scoop on Statins.”

New Physical Activity Guidelines encourage people to “Move Your Way.”

The Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion recently updated the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. To learn about the recommendations, read and share these engaging campaign materials, including fact sheets, videos, and tools.

American College of Cardiology offers free webinars for clinicians on cardiac rehabilitation.

Five webinars—each about one hour long—provide training and resources, including information about regulations and unique considerations for certain conditions, for clinicians who currently lead or want to launch cardiac rehabilitation (CR) programs.

FDA alerts patients and health care professionals to hypertension medication recall.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced recalls of angiotensin II receptor blockers, including valsartan, losartan, and irbesartan. FDA administered this recall after discovering trace amounts of potentially cancer-causing impurities in specific lots of these medications.

Quick Fact

About 3 in 10 American adults, or 71 million people, get less than 10 minutes of exercise a week, a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD). Learn more, including strategies to create change while **earning a continuing medical education credit** from Medscape.

Million Hearts® in the Community

NACCHO announces funding opportunity for public health agencies.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is calling for funding applications from agencies that plan to implement Million Hearts® 2022 strategies in their communities. The application deadline was January 17, 2019.

Stories detail successes in implementing Million Hearts® strategies in communities.

Through the Million Hearts® in Municipalities project, public health professionals promoted strategies to reduce cardiovascular disease risk, such as a social media campaign to encourage tobacco cessation in Bell County, Texas, and an effort to create environments that encourage physical activity in Albany County, New York.

Science brief outlines evidence from hypertension control interventions.

[PDF - 1,400 KB]

This summary from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes how three health departments used evidence-based interventions to diagnose and manage hypertension, and explains what they found.

The Science of Million Hearts®

American Heart Association releases scientific statement on statin safety and efficacy. (*Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol*)

Evidence shows statins rarely cause symptomatic side effects. (*Circulation*)

Smokers with mental health or substance use disorders have higher risk of death, not enough cessation counseling. (*Am J Prev Med*)

New Physical Activity Guidelines detail strong evidence that people can lower CVD risk with regular activity. [PDF - 36 KB] (*Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes*)

Higher body mass index is likely to cause blood pressure and heart problems, even in youth. (*Circulation*)

Task force releases clinical consensus on strategies to help patients quit tobacco. (*J Am Coll Cardiol*)

Do This!

View a Map of the Hypertension Control Champions.

Get a sense of the national scope of the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge. Check out this map of winners: Is there a Champion near you? The next application cycle opens in February, so stay tuned for your chance to get on the map!