

HIGH CHOLESTEROL INFORMATION

Your child or adolescent's recent bloodwork identified high cholesterol levels, also known as "lipids".

The first line treatment in children for reducing cholesterol levels are nonpharmacologic measures known as "heart healthy" lifestyle changes. These include dietary modifications, physical activity, and occasionally weight loss (only if clinically indicated and advised by your medical team).

Studies have shown that positive changes in these areas have been associated with improvements in cholesterol levels in children and adolescents.

Dietary Modifications

- Reduce "saturated" fats and replace them with "polyunsaturated" fats
- Increase the amount of fiber from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Your child's medical team will provide specific information and handouts with information on dietary changes to implement at home
- At your request, we can facilitate a referral to a registered dietician for assistance in this area
- Services offered by a registered dietician are not covered by OHIP though some private insurance plans cover this service and some family physician's offices have dieticians available for patients to access free of charge

Physical Activity

- Two important factors – increasing the amount of physical activity and reducing the amount of time spent engaging in sedentary behaviours (screen time and technology)
- Children above the age of five should engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity everyday
- Three times per week, children should engage in a vigorous intensity activity
- Examples of moderate intensity activities may include: walking to school, playing active games at recess or after school, riding a bike around the neighbourhood, going tobogganing in the winter
- Examples of vigorous intensity activities may include: gym classes, informal recreational sporting games with friends (soccer or basketball with friends), formal extracurricular activities (swimming, martial arts, dance classes)

Weight Loss

- If this applies to your child or adolescent, you will be advised by their care team
- In general, the goal of increasing physical activity and/or improving diet is to improve heart health and not to reduce weight

Your child's medical team will continue to monitor their cholesterol levels and if you have any questions please reach out for more information.