GETTING TO GRIPS WITH FH

A guide for teenagers living with Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH)
WHAT IS **FAMILIAL HYPERCHOLESTEROLAEMIA** (FH)?

FH IS AN INHERITED CONDITION, WHERE AN ALTERED GENE CAUSES HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL.

Having FH means that your body makes too much cholesterol. This can stick to the insides of your blood vessels and damage them.

LIVING WITH FH

Knowing how to ‘Live with FH’ means you can grow up the same as anyone else and live a healthy and active life.
FH is relatively easy to diagnose and identifying it at a younger age is really important. Treatment is more effective when started early, before high levels of cholesterol can cause any damage to your blood vessels.

**How is it diagnosed?**

Your doctor may suspect you have FH if:

- Your cholesterol is very high
- Other family members have been diagnosed with FH
- There is a history of early cardiovascular disease in close family members
Cholesterol is really important to keep our bodies working properly, but too much can be unhealthy.
A blood test will reveal your levels of “BAD” and “GOOD” cholesterol.

Types of cholesterol:

**LDL** = BAD CHOLESTEROL

- Low Density Lipoprotein

**HDL** = GOOD CHOLESTEROL

- High Density Lipoprotein

Top tips for reducing your bad cholesterol...
Healthy eating is important for everyone - not just those who have FH.

Choosing to eat healthily is about making small gradual changes such as swapping those not so healthy habits with great new healthy ones.

But what you eat on a regular basis is what matters. So occasionally eating less healthy foods is unlikely to result in increased blood cholesterol.
**Choose More...**

- Fruits & Vegetables
- Nuts, Seeds & Plain Popcorn
- Water
- Oatcakes & Crumpets
- Low Fat Yoghurt, Milk & Cheese
- Vegetable Spreads & Oils
- Lean Meat, Fish & Beans
- Wholemeal Bread
- Muesli or Porridge
- Brown Rice & Pasta

**Choose Less...**

- Chips
- Crisps, Sweets & Chocolate
- Fizzy, Sugary Drinks
- Biscuits & Cakes
- Full Fat Yoghurt, Milk & Cheese
- Butter
- Sausages, Burgers & Fatty Meat
- White Bread
- Sugary Breakfast Cereals
- White Rice & Pasta
Exercising causes the body to produce endorphins. These are chemicals that can help you feel good.

Being physically active benefits every part of the body, including the mind.
Staying ACTIVE can help you...

- Increase your good cholesterol
- Keep a healthy body weight
- Look and feel great
- Increase your muscle strength
- Boost your immune system
- Sleep well
- Make friends
Smoking can reduce your levels of good cholesterol and can damage the insides of healthy blood vessels.

Smoking is also highly addictive, very expensive and socially unacceptable.

For help to quit smoking, visit: www.nhs.uk/smokefree
If you’re over 18 years old, you can still enjoy drinking alcohol sensibly.

For information on safe guidelines, visit: www.drinkaware.co.uk
A statin is a small tablet, which you will usually need to take every day. Statins are best taken at night but you may choose to take it at a different time of the day if it helps you remember and that is ok too.

Statins help the body filter cholesterol out of the blood and are very effective for lowering your bad cholesterol.
If you ever forget to take a tablet, taking more the next time isn’t a good idea. Instead, just return to your usual dosage.

Keeping active and eating healthily are very important when you have FH, but for most of us, this is not enough to reduce your cholesterol levels sufficiently and it’s likely that you will need to take a medicine.
LET'S RECAP!

So if you have FH you can stay fit and healthy by:

1. Healthy eating

2. Staying active
3. Not smoking

4. Not drinking too much alcohol

5. Taking your medicines
What do we do?
We provide expert support, education and influence, by:
- campaigning for proper diagnosis, treatment and care
- helping people manage high cholesterol
- providing education and training for healthcare professionals

HEART UK saves lives by helping people avoid heart attacks and strokes caused by high cholesterol.

www.heartuk.org.uk
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