

# Living with Elevated Lipoprotein(a) – What You Need to Know

## What is Lipoprotein(a) [Lp(a)]?

Lipoprotein(a), or Lp(a), is a type of fat particle in your blood. It carries cholesterol and other fats through your bloodstream. While some lipoproteins are considered “good” or “bad” cholesterol, Lp(a) is known as a **genetic lipoprotein**, which means its levels are mostly inherited from your family.

## 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.

## 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.



### Did you know...

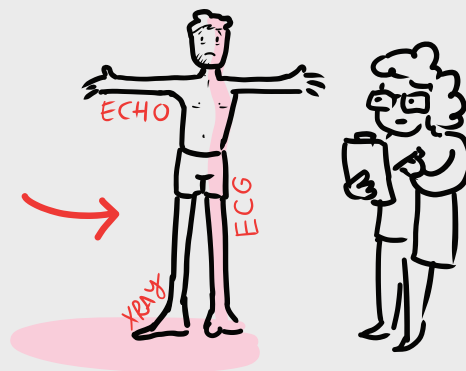
**1 in 5 people worldwide have elevated Lp(a) levels, but many don't know it because there are no clear symptoms.**

## 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 valve in your heart).



## 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 are affected by ASCVD



**1 in 5**

Canadians have high Lp(a)



## 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:** Follow a diet rich in healthy fats (like nuts, fish, and olive oil), plenty of vegetables, and whole grains. Limit unhealthy fats and sugar.
- **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, high blood pressure, or diabetes.



## New Treatments on the Horizon

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.

## Take Action Now

If you think you may have high Lp(a) or have a family history of heart disease, talk to your doctor about getting tested. Early detection and lifestyle changes can help protect your heart health.

## Support and Resources

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.

For more information, visit:  
[www.heartlife.ca](http://www.heartlife.ca)



## Mission

The HeartLife Foundation is a patient-driven charity whose mission is to transform the quality of life for people living with heart failure by engaging, educating, and empowering a global community to create lasting solutions and build healthier lives.

For more information on Lp(a) and other support please visit us at [heartlife.ca/academy/](http://heartlife.ca/academy/)  
[heartlife.academy](http://heartlife.academy)



[www.heartlife.ca](http://www.heartlife.ca)

It's About Life, Not Failure™  
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