

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a kind of fat found in your blood. The most common cause of high blood cholesterol levels is too much saturated fat in the diet. Overweight people are more likely to have high cholesterol levels. High cholesterol levels increase your risk of developing heart disease.

Reduce your risk with advice from your pharmacist

Your pharmacist can give you advice on how to reduce your blood cholesterol levels and advise on lifestyle changes that you can make such as healthy eating and exercise that will help. Some pharmacies offer cholesterol tests to monitor levels in your blood.

Put to the test

If your pharmacy offers blood pressure or cholesterol testing this will be done in a quiet area or in some cases a designated treatment room - just ask your pharmacist, in most cases **no appointment is needed**.

Pharmacists offering testing are trained to do so and use the same equipment as other health professionals to ensure **accurate results**. Depending on your results you may be given **on-the-spot advice** on how to lower your blood pressure or cholesterol levels or asked to come back so these can be monitored (for an accurate cholesterol measurement a few tests are needed). You may be asked to visit your doctor or practice nurse for more advice or treatment. As with your GP surgery your pharmacist will keep a record of your results and the advice given.

DIY testing

Many pharmacies sell **blood pressure** monitors which you can use to monitor blood pressure. **Some health professionals such as GPs may encourage patients to take regular blood pressure readings in more relaxed surroundings to get an accurate picture**. Pharmacists can help you choose a monitor and show you how to use it. Home testing should be used in addition to monitoring by a health professional such as a GP or pharmacist.

Home test kits for measuring **cholesterol** levels are also available from some pharmacies. Your pharmacist or GP can advise you on the suitability of home testing kits to monitor your cholesterol.

Note your numbers

If you have a blood pressure test, keep a note of your numbers.

Date: <input type="text"/>	Date: <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> mmHg	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> mmHg
Date: <input type="text"/>	Date: <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> mmHg	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> mmHg

Online health advice and information

For more men's health info and advice visit:
www.malehealth.co.uk

General:

www.dpp.org.uk
www.chic.org.uk
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
www.askyourpharmacist.co.uk
www.medicinechestonline.com

Heart health:

www.bpassoc.org.uk
www.bhf.org.uk
www.heartuk.org.uk



This leaflet contains general information produced by Developing Patient Partnerships which can be used as the first step to help you decide the best course of action to take when you or your family are not well. In the absence of any examination, it is not possible to reliably diagnose and treat a medical condition. Diagnosis can only be carried out by a suitably qualified health professional after a consultation. The advice and guidance in this booklet is the responsibility of Developing Patient Partnerships.

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Pop down your local

for what every man needs to know...

From hangovers to heart health: ask your pharmacist

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"Just a quick one"

Got a health problem and think you can fix it? Often you can, quickly and easily. There are many remedies that you can buy there-and-then from your pharmacist, especially for common ailments like coughs and colds. Most won't need a prescription from a doctor and if you keep a well-stocked medicines cabinet at home you can often DIY straight away when it comes to treating them.

Need some advice? Pop into your nearest pharmacy for on-the-spot health advice and information. Pharmacists are a key part of the NHS team and can help you deal with many common health complaints. They are also experts in diagnosis of common ailments, lifestyle advice and medicines. Pharmacists can advise you on how to sort out loads of health problems and answer any questions you may have about prescription or over-the-counter medicines.

Self-care, or asking your pharmacist, is often the **quickest and easiest** way to feel better with fast-action symptom relief - **without having to visit your doctor.**

"Men's talk"

You can speak to your pharmacist in private - even about personal symptoms (like doctors, pharmacists have heard it all before - no matter how embarrassing you think it is). If you want to talk out of earshot of other customers, most pharmacies now have a quiet or private consultation area, just tell the pharmacist if you want to have a chat on the quiet. **Like doctors, pharmacists must treat your personal information in the strictest confidence.**

If you have a problem or need some advice about any prescription or over-the-counter medicines you are taking ask your pharmacist - they are the experts. Here are some questions you may want to ask your pharmacist to help you understand your medicines better:

- what does this medicine do?
- how long will I need to use it?
- how and when should I take it?
- should I avoid any other medicines, drinks, foods or activities when I am taking this medicine?
- what are the possible risks and side effects - and what should I do if they happen to me?

Pharmacists will also advise if it would be better for you to see another health professional such as your GP to deal with your problem.

"Something for the weekend, sir?"

There are many minor ailments such as colds and flu, minor sports injuries or even hangovers that we all experience from time to time. When you want results fast, especially at the weekend, pop down to your local pharmacy:

Stuffed yourself silly?

Your pharmacist can advise you about indigestion remedies if you are feeling bloated, uncomfortable, have a lot of wind or a burning pain in your chest.

Gardening gripes?

Your pharmacist can help ease back pain if you've strained a ligament or muscle (e.g. after lifting heavy weights).

Injury on the football or rugby pitch?

Your pharmacist can help with minor sports injuries like cuts and bruises, sprains and strains.

Too much booze?

Your pharmacist can give you extra hangover help if you have a sore head, feel sick and need re-hydration.

Shouting for your local team?

Your pharmacist can help with sore throat relief that comes in the form of lozenges, pastilles and sprays.

Dodgy take away?

Your pharmacist can help with remedies to ease nausea and relieve diarrhoea.

Feeling lucky?

Then be prepared - your pharmacist stocks condoms in all different sizes, shapes, thicknesses and flavours.

"Sorted"

Heart disease is one of the biggest killers of men - to prevent this you need to find a balance between doing things like going to the pub and having a healthy lifestyle.

Not only can pharmacists deal with minor health problems and offer medicines advice they can help you stay sorted with your health and lifestyle in general.

When it comes to reducing your risk of developing heart disease, pharmacists can offer advice on healthy eating, **giving up smoking** and exercising. Like your GP surgery, many can also offer **blood pressure, cholesterol** and weight checks. For easy access to health and lifestyle advice plus fast and accurate results, ask your pharmacist. No appointment needed!

Smoking

If you have the urge to give up, are thinking about it, or have decided to go for it, talk to your pharmacist. Smoking increases your risk of developing heart disease (as well as your risk of erection problems!).

Reduce your risk with advice from your pharmacist

Pharmacists can advise you on available nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products like patches, gum, nasal spray, tablets and lozenges and inhalators that can double your chance of successfully quitting. Your pharmacist can advise you on which product will suit you. Some pharmacies may offer a smoking cessation service similar to your GP surgery.

For more advice call the NHS Smoking Helpline 0800 169 0 169/ www.givingupsmoking.co.uk (England and Wales) or Smokeline - 0800 84 84 84 (Scotland only).

Blood pressure

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in your arteries. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is a condition where blood pressure is consistently higher than normal. High blood pressure is defined as a level of 140/90mmHg or above. High blood pressure increases your risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke.

Reduce your risk with advice from your pharmacist

Ask your pharmacist about high blood pressure. High blood pressure rarely has any symptoms so you can have it without realising. The only way to be sure is to **have your blood pressure measured regularly** and to be aware of your most vital statistic - your blood pressure numbers. Many pharmacies can offer a simple, accurate test that can help identify high blood pressure (without having to go to your GP surgery). They can also offer on-the-spot advice on how to lower your blood pressure (see **Put to the test** for more info).

If you have a blood pressure test, keep a note of your numbers (you can do this on the back page of this leaflet) and bring the record with you each time you visit the pharmacist.

For more information contact the Blood Pressure Association (BPA) 020 8772 4994/ www.bpassoc.org.uk. Look out for the BPA National Blood Pressure Testing Week, held every September.

For more men's health info and advice visit: www.malehealth.co.uk