

#AHA18: Just in - new cholesterol management guidelines



Heart experts have just released new cholesterol management guidelines at the [AHA Meeting](#) in Chicago. The new guidelines recommend personalised risk assessments and tailored treatment.

The new guidelines provide more clarity for clinicians by outlining treatment categories based on cholesterol scores. According to Neil J. Stone, a cardiology professor at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and Vice Chairman of the committee that wrote the guidelines, experts are now endorsing the scope of risk discussion.

Key points from the new guidelines include:

1. Use of high-intensity statin therapy for people under the age of 75 who have atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. The goal should be to reduce their LDL by 50%.
2. Use of moderate-intensity statin therapy in people aged 40 to 75 with diabetes. This should be done regardless of their 10-year risk of disease.
3. Stick to the guiding principle that lower is better as far as LDL is concerned. Emphasise on the importance of a healthy living lifestyle - exercising and eating healthy. Blood pressure should be controlled, and smoking should be discouraged.
4. Use of preventive treatment for people who might be at risk of disease. Ezetimibe should be the drug of choice in patients who have suffered a heart attack or have multiple high-risk conditions.
5. Coronary artery calcium tests should be used in patients who are at intermediate risk and when a decision about statin therapy is uncertain. Statin therapy may be withheld if CAC is zero except in smokers, patients with diabetes and those with a strong history of premature ASCVD. It is interesting to note that coronary artery calcium scoring was deemphasised in the 2013 cholesterol guidelines but this changes with the new guidelines.
6. Continuous monitoring cholesterol is encouraged, and it is recommended that patients on statin therapy should be assessed every 4 to 12 months.

The new guidelines are published in the American Heart Association journal [Circulation](#) and the [Journal of the American College of Cardiology](#).

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