

Med-Sense Guaranteed Association

JOURNAL

Inside This Issue

- 4 Tips to Get High Cholesterol Under Control
- Roadside Assistance Member Benefit
- Addressing Childhood Bullying
- Giving Back



MSGGA
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4 Tips to Get High Cholesterol Under Control

(Family Features) Heart disease is the nation's leading cause of death for men and women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but many people aren't aware they may be at elevated risk. More than 71 million adults in the United States have high low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and nearly 50 million don't have it under control, which puts them at higher risk for cardiovascular events, such as heart attack and stroke.


What's more, nearly one-third (31%) of U.S. adults are not aware that having high cholesterol puts them at greater risk for heart attack and stroke, according to the findings of a recent study conducted by The Harris Poll commissioned by Esperion Therapeutics, Inc. The poll also revealed some inconsistent understanding about treatment options available for those with uncontrolled cholesterol. Fully 3 in 10 (30%) of those taking statins believe statins are the only LDL lowering


treatment available for those with high LDL cholesterol.


“In auto racing, the red flag means danger on the track, stopping the race immediately,” said Dr. JoAnne Foody, chief medical officer at Esperion. “We are launching a patient education program, ‘Wave the Red Flag,’ to encourage people with uncontrolled high cholesterol to have their levels checked right away and discuss appropriate treatment options with their health care provider.”


If your high cholesterol is uncontrolled, understanding how you can achieve greater control can reduce your risk for serious health conditions, including potentially life-threatening cardiovascular events.

Consider these tips to get high cholesterol under control.

 **Talk with your doctor.** Speaking with your physician is an important first step to managing any health condition. Your doctor can help you understand the severity of your condition and whether a treatment plan should be moderate or aggressive.

 **Check your progress.** Keeping tabs on your cholesterol can help you and your health care team gauge whether your treatment plan is working. If you don't have heart disease, you may not need to check as frequently, but your doctor can recommend the appropriate intervals to help manage your cholesterol most effectively.

 **Take medications as prescribed.** Statins are the medications most often recommended by treatment guidelines for the management of blood cholesterol, and nearly one-third (30%) of those taking statins believe they are the only cholesterol-lowering treatment available, according to the survey. However, even with maximal statin therapy, some patients with chronic disease do not meet recommended LDL cholesterol levels. Taking your medications regularly and as instructed helps your doctor determine whether additional therapies - including non-statin treatments - could be useful to help manage your blood cholesterol.

 **Make lifestyle adjustments.** Your diet plays a major role in lowering LDL cholesterol. Limiting fatty foods, especially those that are high in saturated and trans fats, is key. Monitoring your overall diet and exercising can also help reduce your risk of high cholesterol. Even if you don't have high cholesterol,

adopting more cholesterol-friendly habits can help prevent your levels from rising to unhealthy levels in the future.

To find additional information about managing your high cholesterol, talk to your health care provider and visit WaveTheRedFlag.info.

Fast Facts About Cholesterol

What is cholesterol?

The liver creates a fat-like waxy substance called cholesterol. It serves useful purposes for the body, including producing hormones and helping digest food.

How do you get high cholesterol?

The human body makes all the cholesterol it needs naturally, so any cholesterol you eat is cholesterol you don't need. However, it can be difficult to avoid because you can find dietary cholesterol in many common foods, including meat, seafood, poultry, eggs and dairy. Other non-dietary contributing factors include health conditions like obesity and diabetes, as well as family history and advancing age.

What is a normal cholesterol level?

An average optimal level of LDL cholesterol is about 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL).

An average optimal level of high-density lipoprotein, or HDL, cholesterol is at least 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women. HDL cholesterol can actually lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Are there symptoms of high cholesterol?

Unlike many health conditions, there are rarely any symptoms that your cholesterol is high. That's what makes regular screening so important.



Roadside Assistance Member Benefit



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- Flat tire assistance
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- Lock-out service
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Addressing Childhood Bullying

When Peer Aggression Goes Too Far



Most people have felt picked on, put down, or left out by peers at some point in their life. Conflict between children, even friends, can be a normal part of development. But some aggressive behaviors cross the line into bullying.

“Bullying is a type of aggression,” says Dr. Jamie Ostrov, a psychologist who studies child development at the University at Buffalo. “But not all aggression is bullying.”

For behavior to be considered bullying, it must feature two things, Ostrov explains. One is a power imbalance between the child doing the bullying and the child being bullied. That imbalance can stem from differences in physical strength, popularity, or other things.

The second is repetition. That is, the behavior happens more than once or creates the fear that it may keep happening.

Bullying can be physical, like hitting or kicking. It may involve damage to property, like schoolbooks or electronics. It can be verbal, like name calling or teasing. And it can be social, such as spreading rumors or excluding someone from a group. These behaviors can happen in person or online.

Being bullied is a common experience. More than 1 in 4 children in middle school report being bullied in person. And 1 in 5 high school students are bullied every year.

Bullying can have life-long consequences. NIH research is yielding new insights into how to prevent and stop bullying behaviors.



Stepping In

What can you or your kids do if a child is being bullied? For kids who witness bullying, speaking up in the moment can feel risky, says Dr. Michele Ybarra, a child mental health expert at the Center for Innovative Public Health Research. “Kids don’t want to be the next target—that’s a real fear,” she says.

But there are other things kids can do if they want to help someone. “If it feels too big, too scary, and not safe for a child to speak up when they witness bullying, then maybe they can get a group of their friends

who, together, can stick up to the bully. Or see if a trusted adult can help,” she explains.

Kids can also do other things to offer support, Ybarra adds, “like sitting with the person who was bullied at lunch. Or just saying something nice to them at their locker can sometimes make a big difference.”

While parents may want to confront a child who is bullying their kid, or the parents of the child who is doing the bullying, “that can also escalate problems,” says Ostrov. “It’s better to calmly but assertively report the incidents to the school.”

He also recommends listening to your children and being careful not to dismiss their concerns. You can also try role-playing with your kids to practice how to respond when being bullied.

“Role-playing with children to help them figure out how to solve these situations can really have an impact,” he says.

A lot of bullying happens face to face. But it is happening online more and more. This is called cyberbullying. Cyberbullying isn’t much different from in-person bullying, Ostrov says. It’s just happening in a different place. And they often occur together.

“What’s happening online typically mirrors what happens offline, and vice versa,” Ostrov says.

Cyberbullying can happen through email, text messaging, social media, and even chat rooms in online

A Cycle of Hurt

Kids who are seen as different from their peers in some way are more likely to be the target of bullying behaviors. Being bullied can cause lasting harm. Kids who experience bullying are at higher risk for mental health conditions, like depression and anxiety, and for dropping out of school.

The reasons why some kids bully others are numerous. Some kids who bully may be dealing with aggression or violence at home. Others may struggle with social skills and have trouble understanding others’ emotions. Some may bully to fit in or gain social status.

Being bullied can sometimes start a cycle of bullying. Kids who are bullied will often go on to bully others. “Victims learn from those experiences and can become the aggressors,” Ostrov explains. This puts them at risk for other problems, too.

Kids who engage in bullying in elementary and middle school are more likely to develop other harmful behaviors as they get older, says Dr. Dorothy Espelage, a psychologist who studies peer aggression at the University of North Carolina.

“They have the greatest odds of engaging in sexual harassment and sexual violence later on,” she explains.

Kids who bully also have an increased risk of mental health conditions and problems in school, adds Ostrov. And those who are both bullied and bully others are at the greatest risk for mental health conditions and school behavior problems.

video games. Parents may have no idea their child is being bullied online.

For signs that a child may be experiencing bullying, see the Wise Choices box. You can learn more about responding to bullying at StopBullying.gov (link is external).

Preventing Bullying

Ybarra and Espelage are testing a new anti-bullying program for schools to use. For their study, they're sending texts about how to handle bullying to kids outside of school hours.

"This way, kids get to interact with the content on their phone, on their own, when and where it's safe for them," Ybarra explains.

The research team is currently testing a nine-week program in a group of middle-school students. The program is designed to increase social and emotional skills. First, the team is testing whether kids will use the program. Next, they want to see if it leads to a decrease in bullying behaviors.

Ostrov's team is testing a program for a very different group of kids—those still in preschool. The team has built a program for classrooms that uses puppets to let kids practice problem solving and making friends.

Study results have shown that this program can help decrease harmful behaviors, like hitting and kicking, and increase positive social behaviors, like helping and including others.

Ostrov's team is now developing and testing a version of the program for teachers to use, along with coaching from the research team. Their hope is that teachers will eventually be able to use the program on their own, without support from the researchers.

"We want to try to change bullying behavior as early as possible," Ostrov says. "The earlier we do that, the less likely it is for kids to get into these cycles that may have negative consequences later."

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health

Wise Choices

Warning Signs a Child Is Being Bullied

- Unexplained injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, or electronics.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick, or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits.
- Trouble sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades or loss of interest in school.
- Hiding their device or screen when others are near.
- Avoiding discussions of what they're doing on their device.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Expressing feelings of helplessness or negative thoughts about themselves.
- Self-destructive behaviors, including talk of suicide.

Adapted from StopBullying.gov

STOP BULLYING!



Verbal



Social



Physical



Cyber-bullying

Giving Back



College has never been more expensive than it is today. In an effort to ease the financial burden for students and their families, MSGA offers college scholarships to members and their dependents. Since the start of the scholarship program in 2015 MSGA has awarded 427 individual scholarships totaling over 1.5 million dollars.

Each year, when given the opportunity to further help the community outside of our scholarship program, we provide financial gifts to select nursing schools. These gifts have enabled those schools to provide scholarships to a number of their own nursing students who might otherwise not have been able to complete their studies due to financial stress. The following are schools we have proudly supported over the years:

- **St. Louis University** - MSGA worked with St. Louis University to establish the MSGA Nursing Scholarship Fund and gifted \$75,000 in 2017, \$25,000 in 2018, \$25,000 in 2019, \$25,000 in 2020, \$15,000 in 2021 and \$15,000 in 2022 into this fund. The Go Further Scholarship initiative via St. Louis University has a matching program that doubled the impact of the gifts. Thanks to donations from MSGA and the matching funds, the scholarship fund grew to \$280,000. The funds have been awarded to those nursing students who show financial need and academic success.
- **College of St. Mary** - Located in Omaha, Nebraska, the College of Saint Mary is a Catholic women's university that has an outstanding nursing program. MSGA provided \$75,000 in 2017, \$25,000 in 2018, \$25,000 in 2019, \$25,000 in 2020, \$15,000 in 2021, and \$15,000 in 2022 to the school which in turn has provided 36 students with \$5,000 scholarships.
- **St. John's School of Nursing** - St. John's School of Nursing is located in Springfield, IL, and offers upper-division bachelor nursing degree programs to those who have already completed their liberal arts and science courses at other institutions. The St. John's School of Nursing is associated with the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis and offers students hands-on experience to accompany their nursing program. Since December 2015, MSGA has provided a total of \$180,000 to the St. John's School of Nursing. These funds have been awarded to students at the nursing school.

MSGA plans to continue these programs in 2024
Please continue to check the website for more information.

<https://www.medsensemembors.com/>

For information regarding your membership
and association services, call or write:

**Membership Services Office
Med-Sense Guaranteed Association
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St. Louis, MO 63131
1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200**

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.



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