

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE AND CHOLESTEROL

Fact Sheet

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) – A Major Canadian Public Health Problem

- It is the leading cause of death with 36% of all deaths in Canada attributed to CVD in 1999 (the latest year for which Statistics Canada has data).¹
- 80% of Canadians have at least one risk factor for CVD and 11% have three risk factors or more.¹
- CVD is the primary contributor to the length of stay in hospital with approximately 50% of admissions in all age groups.¹
- Hospitalization for CVD costs over four billion dollars annually in Canada.¹
- The total annual cost of CVD in 2000 in Canada was estimated to be \$20.1 billion, including the direct costs of treatment and indirect costs such as lost productivity due to premature mortality.²

High Cholesterol – The No. 1 Risk Factor for Cardiovascular Disease

- An estimated 48% of Canadian men and 43% of women have elevated cholesterol, that is total cholesterol greater than 5.2 mmol/L.¹
- Over 30 years' worth of experimental, clinical and epidemiological studies have confirmed that elevated LDL-cholesterol ('bad cholesterol') is a major independent and modifiable risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease.³
- The latest Canadian guidelines (2003) for the management and treatment of high cholesterol set more aggressive LDL-C targets.⁴
- The previous guidelines (2000) recognized four risk categories — very high, high, moderate and low. The new guidelines are simplified with three risk categories — high, moderate and low.

2000 vs. 2003 Guidelines

CHD Risk	2000 targets (LDL-C)	2003 targets (LDL-C)
Very High 10-yr risk of CHD \geq 30%, high risk of diabetes mellitus, or CHD	< 2.5 mmol/L	N/A
High 10-yr risk of CHD 20-30%	< 3.0 mmol/L	< 2.5 mmol/L
Moderate 10-yr risk of CHD 10-20%	< 4.0 mmol/L	< 3.5 mmol/L
Low 10-yr risk of CHD <10%	< 5.0 mmol/L	< 4.5 mmol/L

References:

1. The growing burden of heart disease and stroke in Canada 2003. Ottawa: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 2003. http://www.cvdinfobase.ca/cvdbook/CVD_En03.pdf.
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3. MacLean D, Chockaligam A. Elevated Blood Cholesterol and the Prevention of Heart Disease. *Can. J. Cardiol.* 1999; 15-4.
4. Fodor JG, Frohlich JJ et al. "Recommendations for the management and treatment of dyslipidemia and prevention of cardiovascular disease" *CMAJ* 2003 Oct 28;169(9):921-4.