



## **NHS Tayside Diabetes Managed Clinical Network Patient Information Leaflet**

### **Diabetes and Cholesterol**

Diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure and high cholesterol are linked with heart disease and strokes in both men and women.

#### **What is Cholesterol?**

There are two main types of cholesterol or blood fats:

- HDL or High Density Lipoprotein, which usually protects against heart disease. This is good cholesterol. However in some people with diabetes, this cholesterol does not work as well as in non-diabetic people.
- LDL or Low Density Lipoprotein, which may become deposited in your blood vessels. This is bad cholesterol. In some people with diabetes, this is much more likely to happen.

Adding together all the blood cholesterol gives the Total Cholesterol.

#### **What is tested & how often?**

Most people with diabetes should have a test for Total Cholesterol and HDL cholesterol performed once a year. LDL cholesterol is difficult to measure. However having information on Total and HDL cholesterol is sufficient for the majority of patients.

#### **What treatment is needed?**

All patients with diabetes over the age of 40 should be on a statin tablet.

If high cholesterol levels are found, that is a total cholesterol more than 4, then reducing the amount of fat in your diet is necessary. The dietitian can give you advice about how to do this.

If you have had a heart attack or stroke or have poor circulation, your doctor will often give you Aspirin tablets also. These thin your blood and

protect against heart attacks and strokes. **Do not take Aspirin for this purpose without discussing it first with your doctor.**

Ask for advice on activity levels and exercise or see the patient information leaflet on Diabetes and Exercise available from your diabetes healthcare team or [www.diabetes-healthnet.ac.uk](http://www.diabetes-healthnet.ac.uk)

Ask for advice on stopping smoking or see the patient information leaflet on Diabetes and Smoking available from your diabetes healthcare team or [www.diabetes-healthnet.ac.uk](http://www.diabetes-healthnet.ac.uk)

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