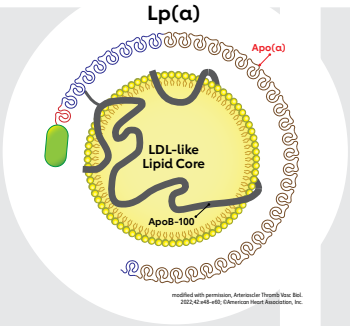
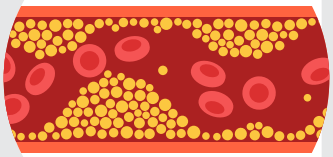
Lipoprotein (a)

What is Lp(a)?

- **Lp(a) stands for lipoprotein** (a) and is pronounced "lipoprotein little a." Lp(a) is a type of lipoprotein that is genetically inherited and produced in the liver. It carries cholesterol, fats, and proteins in the blood.
- Lp(a) is **similar in structure** to low-density lipoprotein (LDL), often referred to as "bad" cholesterol. It consists of a low-density lipoprotein (LDL) particle containing apolipoprotein B (apoB100) connected to an additional protein called apolipoprotein(a) [apo(a)].
- High Lp(a) levels are **a common independent risk factor for heart disease,** affecting approximately 1 in 5 people worldwide.





Why Should I know my Lp(a) number?

- A Lp(a) level **greater than or equal to 50 mg/dL** (or ≥ 125 nmol/L) **increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, peripheral artery disease (PAD), aortic stenosis and other cardiovascular conditions.**
- High Lp(a) levels can lead to **plaque buildup in artery walls,** narrowing arteries and reducing blood flow or causing blockages in vital organs like the heart, brain, kidneys, and lungs.
- Elevated Lp(a) levels also **increase inflammation and blood clotting,** making it difficult to break down existing blood clots and raising the risk of plaque rupture in the arteries.

Many people don't have symptoms.

You could have a high Lp(a) even if you have a healthy lifestyle and all other heart disease risk factors are controlled. **Talk to your health care professional if you have:**

- Family or personal history of premature heart disease (defined as younger than 45 for men and 55 for women)
- Known family history of high Lp(a)
- Diagnosis of familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) - inherited condition where the body poorly recycles LDL cholesterol

Are there other factors that put me at risk for high Lp(a)?

- **Ethnicity** – Black individuals of African descent and South Asian populations are more likely to have high Lp(a) levels.
- **Your Lp(a) level is primarily genetically determined** but some conditions can increase your level such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and post menopause.

If a family member has high Lp(a), it's important to get tested and encourage other family members to do the same. Ask your health care professional about cascade screening.

What can I do if I have high Lp(a)?

Although **lifestyle changes can't lower Lp(a) levels,** and no drugs are specifically approved to lower them. However, it's important to **lower your overall risk of heart disease by including:**


taking medications as prescribed


managing risk factors, especially LDL "bad" cholesterol


eating a healthy diet


being physically active


maintaining a healthy weight


stopping tobacco use


limiting alcohol consumption


getting enough sleep

Talk to your health care professional about Lp(a) and how to reduce your risk for future heart attack and stroke.

Learn more at **heart.org/lpa**