

## New Cholesterol Guidelines Address Hypertension

In the first major update of the government's guidelines for preventing and managing high cholesterol recently released, hypertension is cited as a major risk factor for heart disease. The expert panel recommended that treatment aimed at reducing LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) be intensified among people with hypertension and one other risk factor for heart disease. Specifically, the new guidelines recommend reducing LDL levels to 130 mg/dL or less in those people with 2 or more of the following risk factors:

- Cigarette smoking
- Hypertension (blood pressure 140/90 mmHg or higher, or on antihypertensive medication)
- Low HDL ("good") cholesterol (<40 mg/dL)
- Family history of premature coronary heart disease (men: in first-degree relative < 55 years; women: in first degree relative < 65 years of age)
- Age (men 45 and older; women 55 and older)

Having 2 of these risk factors carries a 10 to 20% risk of developing heart disease within 10 years.

The guidelines recommend use of the new "Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes" (TLC) treatment plan for 3 months. If the patient's LDL levels remain above 130 mg/dL, then drug therapy to reduce LDL is recommended.

**Source:** NIH. Third Report of the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) Expert Panel on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults (Adult Treatment Panel III). May 15, 2001.