**What is Lp(a)?**
- Lp(a) stands for lipoprotein (a), a genetically inherited type of lipoprotein made in the liver, which 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:
- Known family history of high Lp(a)
- Family or personal history of premature heart disease
- 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 have the highest 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.

**How can I lower my Lp(a)?**
Although lifestyle changes can’t lower Lp(a) levels, it’s important to lower your overall risk of heart disease. The following are recommended:
- 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](http://heart.org/lpa)