**What is Lp(a)?**

- Lp(a) stands for lipoprotein (alpha) 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.

**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