

My Child's Lipoprotein(a) Level

What is lipoprotein(a)?

Lipoprotein(a), or Lp(a), is a form of low-density lipoprotein (LDL). LDL is the “bad” type cholesterol, which can build up in the artery wall and cause a blockage (plaque).

Increased levels of Lp(a) may increase the risk of heart disease. Lp(a) may also lead to early blockage in the arteries which can cause heart attack and stroke.

Lp(a) is one factor that we think about when looking at a child's risk factors for heart disease and stroke. If it is high this can help decide when/if a child needs medicine for his/her cholesterol.

What is a high Lp(a) level?

Desirable Lp(a) – Less than 30 mg/dl

Borderline Lp(a) – 30-50 mg/dl

Higher risk Lp(a) – Greater than 50 mg/dl

These are the normal values we suggest but may vary based on the lab.

The increased risk for heart disease and stroke for those with increased Lp(a) is even higher in persons who have a family history of heart disease. A high Lp(a) level can increase the risk for heart disease even if a person has normal or “good” cholesterol levels.

What is the treatment for high Lp(a) levels?

Because genetics play a role in high Lp(a) levels, treatment is hard. Some medicines may lower Lp(a), but the main treatment is careful control of all other heart disease risk factors like LDL cholesterol.

If the Lp(a) level is high, there are other things your child can do to reduce the risk for heart disease and stroke.

- Reduce LDL cholesterol levels to less than 100 mg/dl
- Reduce high blood pressure
- Quit smoking or vaping
- Reduce or get rid of secondhand smoke
- Eat healthy
- Make exercise a part of your child's daily routine

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#7617.