Health Facts for You   UWHealthKids

My Child's Lipoprotein(a) Level

Lipoprotein(a), or Lp(a), is attached to the low-density lipoprotein (LDL) particle. LDL is the "bad" type cholesterol. It can build up in the artery wall and cause a blockage (plaque). Having LDL with the Lp(a) attached makes it extra "sticky." Everyone has some amount of Lp(a), but the amount we have is mostly controlled by genetics. High lipoprotein(a) is an inherited risk factor for heart disease.

Lp(a) and Heart Disease
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) and Children
Lp(a) is one factor that goes into figuring out a child's risk for heart disease and stroke. High levels of Lp(a) help us decide when/if a child needs cholesterol medicine.

Measuring Lp(a)
There are 2 ways Lp(a) is measured. Each method uses a different unit of measurements. These include:
- mg/dL
- nmol/L

Family History
The increased risk for heart disease and stroke for those with increased Lp(a) is even higher if you have a family history of heart disease. A high Lp(a) level can increase the risk for heart disease even if you have normal or "good" cholesterol levels.

Treatment
There are no approved treatments to lower Lp(a) for children or teens at this time. Thus, it is important to control all **other** heart disease risk factors, such as LDL cholesterol.

Steps to Reduce Risk of Heart Disease
To reduce the risk for heart disease and stroke, your child can:
- 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
- Exercise daily

Value Ranges*		
	mg/dL	nmol/L
Desirable Lp(a)	Less than 30 mg/dl	Less than 70 nmol/L
Borderline Lp(a)	30-50 mg/dl	70-125 nmol/L
Higher risk Lp(a)	Greater than 50 mg/dl	Greater than 125 nmol/L

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