

“Those who think they do not have the time for healthy eating will sooner or later have to find the time for illness”

Edward Stanley

In this month's newsletter:

National Cholesterol Month 2021:
Why should you care about your cholesterol levels?

Back Care Awareness Week 2021: Back care in the workplace

Fact & Tip of the month



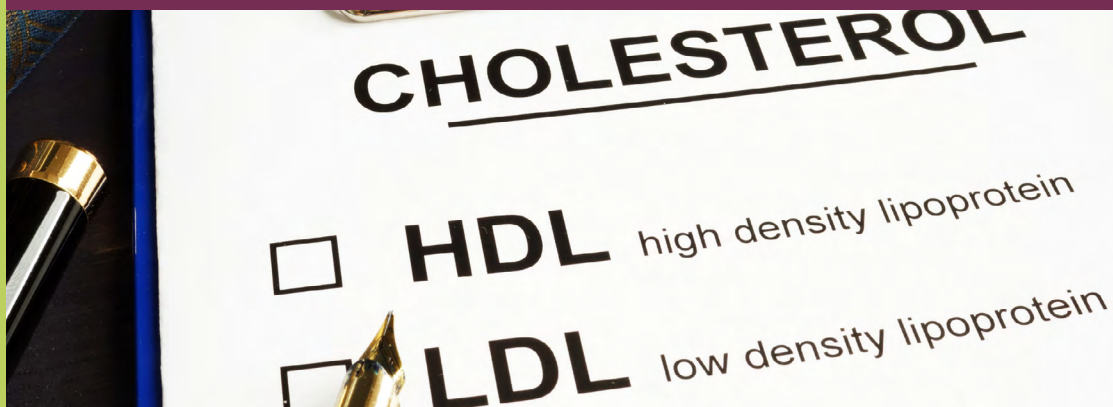
National Cholesterol Month 2021: Why should you care about your cholesterol levels?

National cholesterol month is an entire month dedicated to raising awareness of high cholesterol, the health implications and reducing your numbers.

Cholesterol is a topic that many of us don't really understand – we just know the word and that there is a good and bad version of it.

So, what is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in our blood which our bodies use for several reasons including producing hormones and building healthy cell walls in our brain, nerves and muscles. Approximately 80% of cholesterol is produced in our bodies and the other 20% is from the foods we eat. Physical activity, or inactivity, also influences our cholesterol levels.



We all have both good and bad cholesterol. Your good cholesterol, also known as 'HDL', transports cholesterol to your liver. While your bad cholesterol, also known as 'LDL', transports cholesterol to your arteries. But it's the ratio of the good and bad cholesterol that is important and could potentially be detrimental to your health.

Having too much bad or total cholesterol in the arteries of your heart can lead to blockages and heart attacks and the same applies to the arteries of the brain, of which a blockage can lead to a stroke.

High LDL ('bad') cholesterol is associated with 1 in 4 heart and circulatory disease deaths in the UK and close to half of adults in the UK are living with cholesterol levels above the national guidelines.

What are the causes of high cholesterol?

There are a number of causes of high cholesterol, broken down into things that you can control and things that you can't control.

The causes that you can control include:

- **Eating a lot of saturated or trans fats**
- **Smoking**
- **Not being active enough**
- **Having too much body fat, especially around your middle**

The causes that you can't control are:

- **Getting older**
- **Ethnic background**
- **Family history**



What can you do to change this?

Making some small lifestyle changes or adding new healthy habits can be a great way of reducing or preventing elevated cholesterol levels.

Reduce the amount of saturated fat you consume

Some examples include sausages and fatty cuts of meat, cream, hard cheeses, cakes, biscuits and other processed foods, foods containing coconut or palm oil. Try to replace foods containing saturated fats with small amounts of foods high in unsaturated fats such as oily fish, nuts, seeds, avocados and vegetable oils and spreads.

Eat plenty of fibre

Eating plenty of fibre helps to lower your risk of heart disease, and some high-fibre foods can help to lower your cholesterol. You should aim to eat a mixture of fibre sources and some good examples are wholemeal bread, fruit and vegetables, skin on potatoes, oats and pulses.

Be more active

An active lifestyle can also help lower your cholesterol level. Activities can range from walking and cycling to more vigorous exercise, such as running and energetic dancing.

Doing 150 minutes (this is just 22 minutes a day) of moderate aerobic activity every week can improve your cholesterol levels.

Reduce your alcohol intake

Cutting down on alcohol can help you to lower your cholesterol levels. It can improve your heart health in other ways too, by helping to look after your liver, your blood pressure, your weight and your waistline.

Reduce or quit smoking if applicable

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your cholesterol, your heart and your health. Within days your health will begin to improve and within a year your risk of heart disease will be halved.

Cholesterol testing

Testing your cholesterol levels is a very simple process that involves a tiny pin prick of blood and can help you to understand your cholesterol levels and track any changes that may be relevant to your lifestyle. This can be done either with your GP, healthcare provider, or through Healthy Performance Onsite Health Assessments.

To find out more about cholesterol testing and Healthy Performance Onsite Health Assessments, please click here: <https://www.healthyperformance.co.uk/employee-health-checks/>



Back Care Awareness Week 2021: Back care in the workplace

Many of us take priority in caring for our nutritional needs, ensuring we get enough physical activity and taking the time to look after our mental health. But what do you do to take care of your back and other joints?

When you hear the phrase 'back care', you probably think about trying not to tweak a muscle while gardening or focusing on lifting with your knees when carrying heavy items. But joint and muscle pain, or musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions aren't only prevalent in our personal lives, they're also extremely common in the workplace.

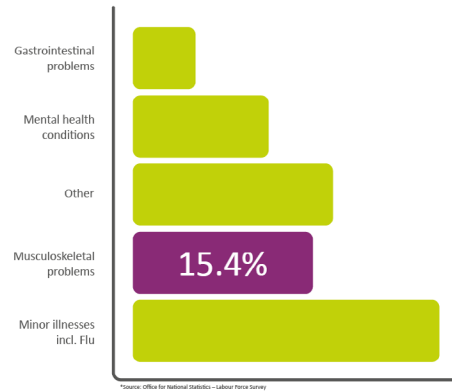
Back care consists of any of several approaches used to restore or maintain a healthy, pain-free back, with regular DSE (display screen equipment) being one of these approaches for desk or office-based workers.

In April this year (2021) we launched HealthyWorkstation, a new online tool that addresses not only traditional risk assessments but empowers the employee to reflect on the work practices and habits during both working and non-working hours.

Why did we create HealthyWorkstation?

In 2020, MSK conditions contributed to 8.9 million days being lost at work and totalling 15.4% of sickness absence in the UK according to an Office for National Statistics survey.

Behind only mental health conditions, musculoskeletal disorders continue to be one of the main causes of work-related illness accounting for 30% of all new and long-standing work-related ill health.



Office and desk-based work continues to be a contributing factor to the onset of employees aches and pains and a study by Bupa found that 63% of people currently working from home say they are experiencing more aches and pains since this transition during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The world has changed rapidly since 2020 and up to half of the UK workforce has transitioned to working from home. HealthyWorkstation allows you to manage your entire workforce simply, effectively and with great value for money.

So, what is HealthyWorkstation?

HealthyWorkstation is the UK's newest online DSE assessment tool, enabling employees to complete an assessment based on both their home and or work set ups.

Our digital platform allows companies to manage their legal obligation to carry out regular DSE workstation assessment, as part of the Health and Safety regulations, while also reducing absenteeism by highlighting any areas for change either at home or in the workplace.

HealthyWorkstation removes the need for unnecessary paperwork and manual filing as employers can access an admin area which displays uptake levels, employee assessment results and key highlights, as well as a company overview report.

Referral pathways can also be incorporated such as physiotherapy, occupational health, eye care providers and others to ensure that all existing pathways are promoted within the tool and that employees receive the support and care that they require.

Back care guides from Healthy Performance

With MSK conditions so prevalent in the workplace, we have also put together a series of video and PDF guides to ensure that both employers and employees have the resources that they need to reduce and manage back pain, correctly set up workstations and learn about the best posture for a healthy back. Visit our Take5 resource library here:

<https://www.healthyperformance.co.uk/resources/backcare/#guides>

To understand how Healthy Performance can help you to easily meet your DSE legal obligations and with great value for money, you can find out more about HealthyWorkstation and enquire here:

<https://www.healthyperformance.co.uk/healthyworkstation/>



Tip of the month

Stretching overhead and opening up your chest and back can counteract slouching. A brisk walk around the room can help boost circulation and energy.

Fact of the month

Eating pumpkin seeds can positively lower your LDL cholesterol levels. They are rich in phytosterol, which block absorption of the more harmful cholesterol.