



# Elevated Lipid Levels in Children: What Parents Should Know

*Pediatric Patient Education Handout*

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## What Is a Lipid Panel?

A lipid panel is a blood test that measures different types of fats (lipids) in the blood. These fats are important for the body, but levels that are too high can increase the risk of heart disease later in life.

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## What Does a Lipid Panel Measure?

### Common Lipid Tests

- **Total Cholesterol:** Overall amount of cholesterol in the blood
- **LDL (“Bad” Cholesterol):** Can build up in blood vessels
- **HDL (“Good” Cholesterol):** Helps remove excess cholesterol from the blood
- **Triglycerides:** A type of fat that comes from food and energy storage

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## What Does “Elevated” Mean?

An elevated lipid panel means that one or more values are higher than recommended for a child's age. This does not usually cause symptoms and does not mean your child is sick — but it is an important early warning sign.

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## Why Might Lipid Levels Be High?

Common reasons include:

- Family history of high cholesterol or heart disease
- Diet high in processed foods, sugary drinks, or unhealthy fats
- Limited physical activity
- Obesity or insulin resistance
- Certain medical conditions or medications

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## What Happens Next?

Your child's provider may recommend:

- Repeating the test (sometimes fasting is needed)
- Lifestyle changes such as healthier eating and increased activity
- Monitoring levels over time
- Referral to a nutritionist or specialist if needed

**Medication is rarely needed in younger children and is usually considered only in specific cases.**

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## How Parents Can Help

### Healthy Eating Habits

- Encourage fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins
- Limit sugary drinks, fast food, and highly processed snacks
- Choose healthy fats (olive oil, nuts, fish)

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### Stay Active

- Aim for at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day
- Reduce screen time when possible
- Make activity a family habit

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## Important Things to Know

- Elevated lipids usually cause no symptoms
- Early detection allows for early prevention
- Small changes can make a big difference over time

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## Our Recommendation

We monitor lipid levels to help protect your child's heart health now and in the future. Most children with elevated lipid levels improve with healthy lifestyle changes.