

## **Practical advice for a healthy diet and lifestyle - How to overcome barriers.**

Making positive lifestyle changes including adopting a heart-healthy diet, stopping smoking, weight management and regular exercise are essential for maintaining optimal LDL-cholesterol levels and for reducing the risk of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD). Diet and lifestyle measures such as these should always form the basis for dyslipidaemia treatment and CVD prevention. However, it may be challenging to motivate patients to follow a healthy diet and lifestyle or to undertake changes and implement them consistently.

*The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and European Atherosclerosis Society (EAS) Guidelines for the management of dyslipidaemias* highlight a few key techniques that are useful for healthcare professionals to encourage any positive behaviour change.<sup>1</sup> These include:

1. Explore the patient's motivation and barriers for change. Help them build self confidence in reaching their goals.
2. Involve the person close to the patient, such as a partner, family, or other household member that may influence their diet and lifestyle and are able to help implement changes day to day.
3. Use the OARS method (Open-ended questions, Affirmation, Reflective listening, Summarising) when discussing behaviour changes.
4. Acknowledge the patient's personal view and circumstances. Tailor advice according to their culture, habits, daily routines, work conditions and situation.
5. Use the SMART goal setting (negotiate goals for change that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely).

Consider asking the patient to keep a food diary for a few days to enable a meaningful discussion about their dietary habits. If needed, consider referring the patient to a registered dietician.

Useful information on how to motivate patients can be found in the e-learning tutorial 'Diet at the Heart' <https://www.dietattheheart.com>, which is hosted at the EAS website and check out the new Infographic 'Dietary advice for management of hypercholesterolaemia' which summarises important aspects about a healthy diet with regard to cholesterol management.

### Reference:

1. Mach F, Baigent C, Catapano AL, et al. 2019 ESC/EAS Guidelines for the management of dyslipidaemias: lipid modification to reduce cardiovascular risk. *Eur Heart J* 2020; 41(1): 111-188  
<https://academic.oup.com/eurheartj/article/41/1/111/5556353>
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