# Warning signs of high cholesterol: Two facial symptoms to watch for



People across the UK are being urged to be vigilant about two specific facial symptoms that could indicate high cholesterol, which is often referred to as a "silent killer" due to its significant role in leading to heart attacks and strokes. High cholesterol typically presents without symptoms, yet there are certain indicators that may emerge, particularly in cases of familial hypercholesterolaemia, a genetic condition linked to elevated cholesterol levels.

High cholesterol occurs when there is an excess of a fatty substance known as cholesterol in the blood. While the body does require some cholesterol for essential functions, an excessive amount can pose serious health risks, leading to the narrowing and hardening of blood vessels, which restricts blood flow and increases the likelihood of serious cardiovascular incidents. According to estimates, nearly two out of five individuals in the UK are affected by high cholesterol, many of whom remain unaware of their condition until it is identified through blood tests or as a result of health-related issues.

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) warns that "there are usually no symptoms of high cholesterol. But if left untreated, it can lead to heart attack and stroke. It's often a hidden risk factor which means it can happen without us knowing until it's too late. That is why it's so important to get your cholesterol level checked," as reported by the Mirror.

The BHF has highlighted two primary visible symptoms that may alert individuals to the presence of high cholesterol. The first is known as corneal arcus, described as a grey or white arc that can be seen at the outer edge of the cornea of the eye. Cardiologist Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, in commentary for the Mayo Clinic, noted that "eventually, the arc may become a complete ring around the iris. The iris is the coloured portion of the eye." While corneal arcus does not affect vision and does not necessitate medical treatment, it is advisable for individuals noticing such changes to consult their GP.

The second symptom, xanthelasmas, consists of soft, yellowish bumps that can appear on or near the corners of the eyelids, usually closer to the nose. The Cleveland Clinic outlines that these yellow lesions form as cholesterol deposits accumulate under the skin. Research indicates that nearly half of individuals with xanthelasmas have elevated cholesterol levels; however, these bumps can also be indicative of other health conditions, such as diabetes or thyroid disorders.

The NHS suggests several lifestyle changes and health checks to prevent high cholesterol or manage existing cholesterol levels effectively. Individuals who have concerns regarding their cholesterol levels are encouraged to seek advice from a general practitioner, who can provide further guidance and potential testing options.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gbnews.com/health/high-cholesterol-symptoms-signs-face> - This article supports the claim that high cholesterol can be indicated by visible signs on the face, such as xanthelasmas and corneal arcus, and it highlights the importance of addressing high cholesterol levels.
* <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/signs-of-high-cholesterol-on-face> - This article explains how xanthelasmas appear as yellowish patches on the eyelids and are associated with high cholesterol, although they do not exclusively indicate this condition.
* <https://www.healthline.com/health/high-cholesterol/cholesterol-symptoms-on-the-skin> - This resource provides information on how high cholesterol can lead to visible skin symptoms, including cholesterol deposits that may appear as yellowish bumps, and it emphasizes the importance of managing cholesterol levels.
* <https://www.mayoclinic.org/symptoms/corneal-arcus/basics/definition/sym-20050813> - This Mayo Clinic resource explains corneal arcus, a symptom that may indicate high cholesterol, though it more commonly occurs with aging.
* <https://www.clevelandclinic.org-health/essentials/what-is-xanthoma> - This Cleveland Clinic resource explains xanthomas and specifically xanthelasmas, which are cholesterol deposits on the skin, and their association with high cholesterol levels.