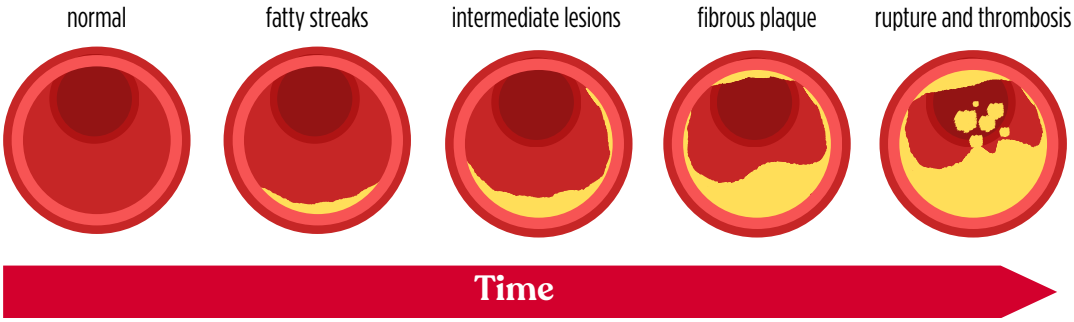
Atherosclerosis starts early in life

Good evidence indicates the process of atherosclerosis can manifest before there are any apparent risk factors, progressing for decades before showing first symptoms.

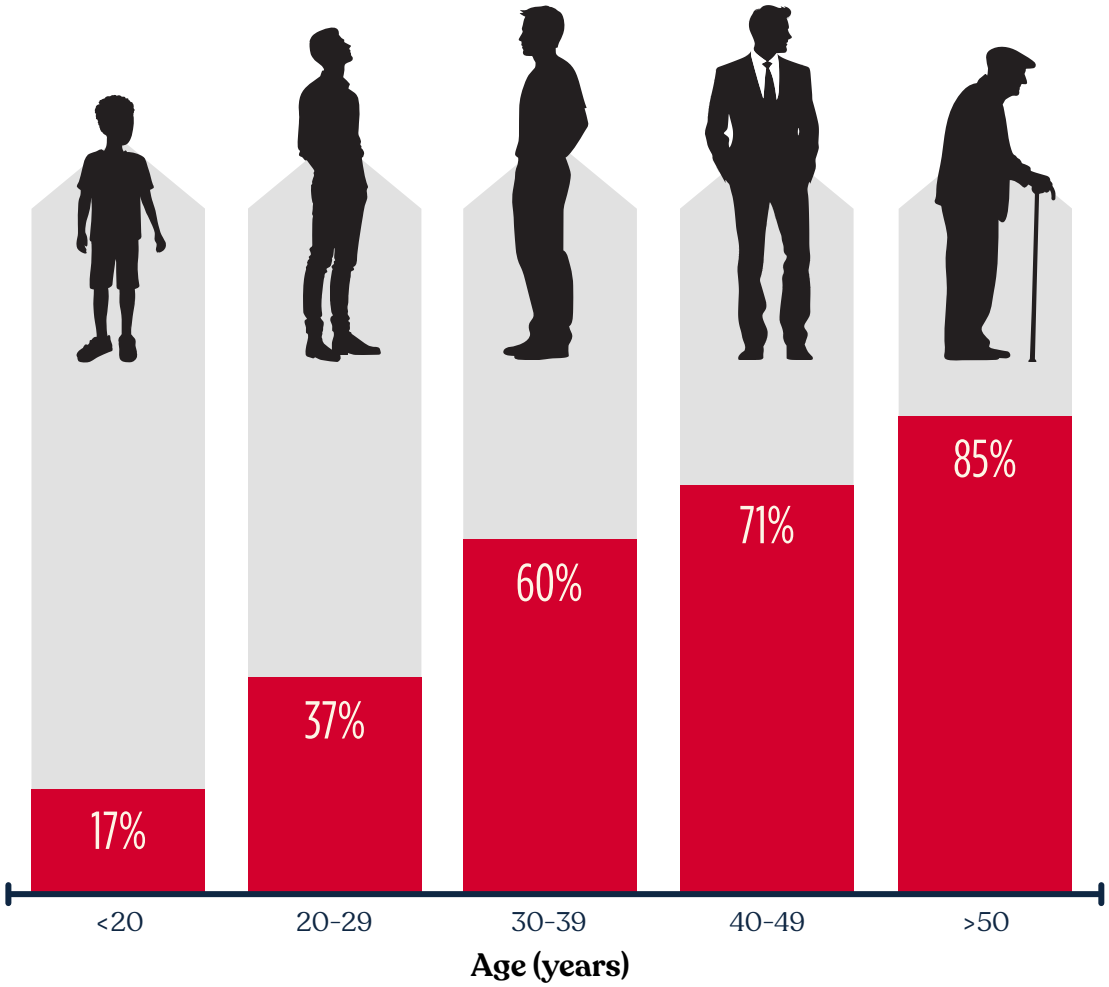
Prolonged high LDL-cholesterol leads to fatty streaks, inflammation, and plaque formation, narrowing the arteries and leading to possible rupture, myocardial infarction or stroke.[1]

Atherosclerosis is a lifelong process



A surprisingly high prevalence of coronary atherosclerosis has been found in young, asymptomatic populations.[1] Early atherosclerotic changes—including arterial thickening and plaque formation—were common, suggesting that the process begins much earlier in life than previously recognised. The findings highlight the importance of early prevention and risk factor management to combat cardiovascular disease.

Prevalence of coronary atherosclerosis by age*



*0.5mm thresholds for defining atherosclerotic lesions. Adapted from Tuzcuet al. (2001)[1]

References: 1. Tuzcu EM, Kapadia SR, Tutar E, *et al.* High prevalence of coronary atherosclerosis in asymptomatic teenagers and young adults: evidence from intravascular ultrasound. *Circulation* 2001; 103(22): 2705-10.