

Cholesterol

Having too much is a problem



Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that's found in all of the cells of our body. Cholesterol itself isn't bad; our body needs cholesterol to make hormones, vitamin D, and to help digest food. But having too much cholesterol is a problem. It's one of the major risk factors for coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

Our liver produces about 75 percent of the cholesterol in our body, but the food we eat is another source of cholesterol. Cholesterol moves through our bloodstream in bundles called lipoproteins (lip-o-PRO-teens). Lipoproteins are made of an outer layer of protein and contain fat (lipid).

There are no symptoms related to high cholesterol, so that is why it's important to have your cholesterol levels measured by a blood test.

Cholesterol is carried throughout the body by two kinds of lipoproteins; both are important and there should be a balance.



HDL

GOOD CHOLESTEROL high-density lipoproteins (HDL) – help remove cholesterol from the body



LDL

BAD CHOLESTEROL low-density lipoproteins (LDL) – build up on artery walls

Talk to your health care provider about:

- healthy eating
- physical activity
- healthy weight
- medications to treat high cholesterol
- alcohol intake
- smoking, tobacco use and quitting

They may suggest healthy lifestyle habits that help you maintain normal cholesterol, and make treatment recommendations based on your personal risk factors. You are the most important part of your health care team – you and your health care provider can work together to keep you as healthy and well as possible.



Your cholesterol numbers are important, but they are just part of your overall health. Your health care provider will consider your cholesterol numbers, along with your family history, age, gender, and other parts of your lifestyle or health, such as smoking, that could raise your risk of heart disease or stroke.

Desirable Lipid Profile Levels

Total cholesterol: Less than 200 mg/dL

LDL ("bad") cholesterol: Less than 100 mg/dL

HDL ("good") cholesterol: Greater than or equal to 40 mg/dL for men
Greater than or equal to 50 mg/dL for women

Triglycerides: Less than 150 mg/dL

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