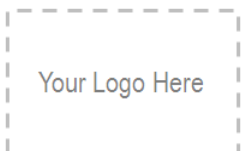




High Cholesterol: What You Need to Know



This brochure can help you learn more about high cholesterol. It doesn't replace regular medical check-ups or your health care provider's advice. Talk with your health care provider about what your cholesterol levels should be.

High Cholesterol

INTRODUCTION

High blood cholesterol (ko-LES-ter-ol), is a common condition that affects many Americans. About 1 in every 6 adults in the United States has high blood cholesterol. High cholesterol increases your risk for getting heart disease or having a heart attack. The good news is that with early treatment, you can reduce your chances of developing heart disease and stroke.

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a yellow, waxy fat-like substance. It is made by the body and is needed for the body to work well. Your body makes all the cholesterol it needs. However, cholesterol is also found in some of the foods that you eat. Your body also has triglycerides—another form of fat in the blood. There are two types of cholesterol:

■ **LDL Cholesterol (Low-Density Lipoprotein cholesterol), or LDL, is known as “bad cholesterol.”** Too much LDL can build up in your blood vessels. This may clog your arteries and lead to heart attack or stroke. If your LDL is high, your risk for heart disease or stroke is high. If you lower it, you can reduce your risk.

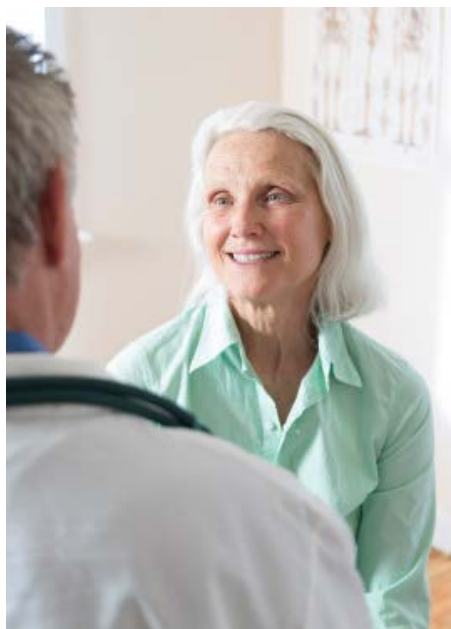
■ **HDL Cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein cholesterol), or HDL, is called “good cholesterol.”** HDL takes the LDL or bad cholesterol out of your blood. High HDL lowers the risk for heart attack and stroke. Low HDL levels raise the risk for heart disease and stroke.

WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL?

You have high blood cholesterol if there is too much cholesterol in your blood. Over time, cholesterol will build up in the blood vessel walls. This can slow down the flow of blood or restrict the flow altogether. Clogged arteries greatly increases the likelihood of heart disease, stroke, and death. There are normally no signs or symptoms that indicate high cholesterol levels; therefore it is necessary to have a blood test to help your health care provider determine what your cholesterol level is.

Cholesterol Goals

Checking your cholesterol levels is easy. Your blood is taken after you haven't eaten for at least 9-12 hours. All adults should have their cholesterol checked at least every 5 years. The blood test will tell you about your “cholesterol profile.”



Cholesterol Profile	Goals	
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL	Talk to your health care provider about your cholesterol levels.
LDL (Bad) Cholesterol	Less than 100 mg/dL	
HDL (Good) Cholesterol	More than 40 mg/dL	
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL	

Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.

Your risk will determine your target cholesterol goal. People with diabetes have the same risk for heart disease and stroke as those who already have cardiovascular disease, so they should strive for even lower levels of LDL cholesterol. If you have additional cardiovascular risk factors, your health care provider may want your level to be below 70 mg/dL.

What Are the Risk Factors for High Cholesterol?

A variety of different risk factors can affect your blood cholesterol level. Some risk factors are beyond your control. There are others that you can control.

Focusing on the risks you **can** control is most important. Doing this can also improve your health in general.

Risk Factors you **CAN** control

Diet	A diet high in saturated fats and cholesterol can increase your blood cholesterol levels.
Weight	Being overweight tends to increase your blood cholesterol level.
Physical Activity	Not enough physical activity is a risk factor for heart disease. Regular exercise can help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels. It also helps you lose weight.
Stress	Studies on stress and high cholesterol have shown that long-term stress can indirectly raise blood cholesterol levels.
Smoking	Cigarette smoking lowers HDL (good) cholesterol.



Risk factors you **CANNOT** control



Age & Gender	As women and men get older, their LDL cholesterol levels often rise. Before menopause, women tend to have lower LDL cholesterol levels than men. After menopause, women tend to have higher LDL levels than men.
Family History	High blood cholesterol can run in families. So if you have a close family member that has high blood cholesterol, you are at high risk for getting the condition.

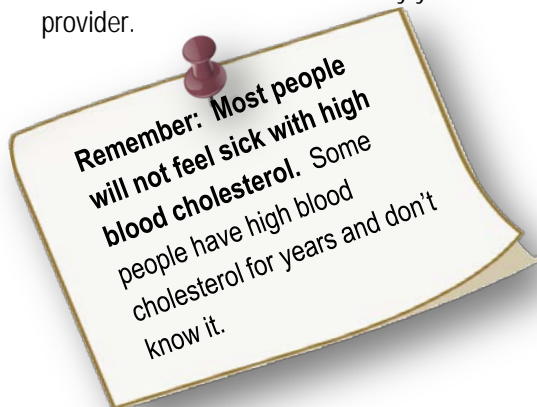
How to Reach Your Cholesterol Goals

There are things you can do to lower your cholesterol.

The main goal in treating high blood cholesterol is to keep your LDL (bad) cholesterol numbers low. Lower LDL levels decrease your risk for heart disease.

You can lower your blood cholesterol by making changes to your lifestyle. You may also need to take medicines. Here are some things you can do:

- **Stay Active**—Routine exercise can lower high cholesterol. Talk with your health care provider before you start a new exercise plan. Ask how much and what kind of exercise is safe for you. If possible, participate in moderate to vigorous exercise at least 2 ½ hours per week or 30 minutes, 5 times a week. Examples include brisk walking, jogging, or fitness classes.
 - Try swimming, walking, dancing, or riding a bike
 - Take the stairs instead of the elevator
 - Park your car a few blocks away or get off the bus a few stops earlier
- **Know Your Numbers**—Have your blood cholesterol checked as directed by your health care provider.
- **Eat Healthy**—Avoid foods that are high in cholesterol or saturated fats. Reduce the amount of cholesterol and saturated fats in your diet. This can lower your blood cholesterol level.
- **Get to and Keep a Healthy Weight**—If you are overweight or obese, try to lose weight. Losing weight can help lower your LDL and total cholesterol levels. It will also raise your HDL and lower your triglyceride levels. To lose weight, cut back your calorie intake and do more exercise. Eat smaller portions and choose foods with labels that say “low or no cholesterol” or “low or no saturated fats.”
- **Stop Smoking**—Talk with your health care provider about programs, products, and medicines that can help you quit smoking. Try to avoid secondhand smoke. If you have trouble quitting smoking on your own, consider joining a support group. Many hospitals, workplaces, and community groups offer classes to help people quit smoking.



- **Take Medicines if Prescribed**—A healthy lifestyle helps to keep you on the lowest dose of medicine. There are many different types of medicines that you could take to lower your high blood cholesterol. Talk to your healthcare provider about which one is best for you.

Taking medicines as prescribed can help you keep your cholesterol levels healthy



- ✓ Take them as directed
- ✓ Take them even if you do not think they are working
- ✓ Take them even if you do not feel sick
- ✓ Tell your health care provider about any side effects or other concerns
- ✓ Tell your health care provider or pharmacist if you start taking any other prescription or over-the-counter medicines or supplements
- ✓ Tell your health care provider if you cannot pay for your medication



High Cholesterol: What You Need to Know



Too much cholesterol can cause heart attacks and stroke.

Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in your body. Too much of it can clog your blood vessels. This build up in the vessel walls is called plaque. It can clog the arteries and block or slow down the flow of blood. This means certain parts of your body won't get the blood that they need.

Your heart: If your heart doesn't get enough blood, you can have a heart attack. This can damage your heart or even cause death.

Your brain: If your brain doesn't get enough blood, you can have a stroke. This can affect your speech and ability to move. Stroke can also lead to death.

There are 2 ways to get too much cholesterol:

1. Your body makes too much cholesterol. This may be due to heredity, age and/or gender.
2. You may be eating too many foods high in cholesterol or saturated fat such as: eggs, butter, whole milk, bacon, and other high-fat foods.

Get your cholesterol checked.

You can have high cholesterol and not know it. The only way to tell is to get it checked. To do this, you need to get a simple blood test. Your health care provider can tell you how you can get this blood test.

Know what your numbers should be.

The blood test will tell you your cholesterol levels. When you get your results, you'll notice that there are different types of numbers.

"Getting more active, eating healthy foods, and taking my medicines as prescribed is working for me. My cholesterol is at goal."



Here's what the numbers mean: The chart below can help you see where your numbers fit in. Talk with your health care provider to see what your numbers should be.

LDL Cholesterol	
Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal (ideal)
100 to 129 mg/dL	Near Optimal/Above Optimal
130 to 159 mg/dL	Borderline High
160 to 189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL and above	Very High
HDL Cholesterol	
Less than 40 mg/dL	Major heart disease risk factor
60 mg/dL and above	Gives some protection against heart disease
Triglyceride	
Less than 150 mg/dL	Normal
150 to 199 mg/dL	Borderline High
200 to 499 mg/dL	High
500 mg/dL and above	Very High
Total Cholesterol	
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200 to 239 mg/dL	Borderline High
240 mg/dL and above	High

Reasons to reach your goal.

Did you know ...?

- High cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease and stroke
- More than 3 out of 10 American adults have LDL levels that are too high for good heart health
- By lowering your cholesterol, you may decrease your chances for having a heart attack or even dying

Action Plan for High Cholesterol



Check off items from the list below that you will be able to change or improve. Or you can write in your own action items.

Get your numbers.

- Plan to get your cholesterol checked. Ask your health care provider how often you need to get it checked.
- See your health care provider if your numbers are not healthy. Follow their recommendations.

Take your medicines, as told by your health care provider.

- Your medicines are there to help you reach your goal. Always take your medicine the right way, each day, as your health care provider prescribed.
- Keep taking your medicines unless your health care provider tells you to stop.

Eat healthy foods.

- Drink skim milk. Pick lean, broiled meats. Eat more foods with fiber. Try foods such as oatmeal, oranges, pears, carrots, kidney beans, and lentils.
- Cut back on foods high in fat and cholesterol. Eat fewer high-fat cheeses, eggs, creamy sauces, fried foods, and whole milk.
- Talk with your health care provider about healthy food options.



Lose extra weight.

- Eat slowly and in smaller portions.
- Lose weight slowly to keep it off – no more than 1 to 2 pounds a week. Be sure to talk with your health care provider about a weight goal and weight loss program that's right for you.

"I eat low-fat foods and stay active. My weight and my cholesterol are both on target. It really paid off."



Move your body. Always check with your health care provider before starting any new exercise program.

- Start an exercise program slowly, then increase the amount of time.
- Get active. Try walking, riding a bike, or swimming at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

No tobacco.

- Stop smoking or smoke less.
- Talk with your health care provider about ways to stop smoking.

Other

1. Are the items that you have chosen achievable? Yes No

2. What will you do to make these changes? _____

3. When will you make these changes? _____

**Take steps today to help manage your high cholesterol.
You can help keep your heart healthy!**

