



# ARE YOU AT RISK?

## QUIKRISK™ SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

The only sure way to know whether you have high cholesterol is to have your blood levels tested, since often there are no symptoms of high cholesterol. However, this test can help you determine whether cholesterol could be a problem for you. Check the box next to each statement which applies to you.

- I'm a man over age 40 or a woman who is postmenopausal or over 50.
- I have diabetes.
- I have high blood pressure.
- I smoke.
- I'm a man and my waist measures more than 102 centimetres (40 inches) or I'm a woman and my waist measures more than 88 centimetres (35 inches).
- I have a parent, brother or sister who had a heart attack or a stroke (before age 55 if male or before age 65 if female).
- I am physically inactive.
- My ethnicity is First Nations, African or South Asian.

### HOW DID YOU DO?

If you didn't check any of the boxes, you're probably doing a good job keeping cholesterol under control.

If you checked one or more boxes, schedule some time soon to discuss cholesterol with your provider.

The more boxes you checked, the more important it is to keep your cholesterol under control. Your provider can suggest lifestyle measures and may also prescribe medication to keep your cholesterol at healthy levels.

If you don't know your cholesterol levels: Get your cholesterol tested no matter how many boxes you checked.

## Quick Tips for Cholesterol Control

- **Minimize** other heart disease risks such as diabetes and high blood pressure. **How:** Stay active, eat plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains; control your weight; take medication if prescribed; and get regular health checkups.
- **Remember** that saturated fat plays a large role in unhealthy cholesterol levels, but limiting dietary cholesterol is also important to heart health.
- **Choose** whipped or tub margarine over the stick variety. The softer a margarine is, the less trans fat it contains. **Even better:** Try the newer vegetable spreads that contain no trans fats.
- **Cook** healthy. Bake, broil, or steam (or BBQ) instead of frying. You'll avoid adding extra fat and calories to meals.
- **Substitute** good fats for bad, but remember that any fat is high in calories — 9 calories per gram. So easy does it on fats in general.
- **Know** that researchers (Harvard) found that moderate egg consumption — up to one a day — does not raise the risk of heart disease in healthy individuals. Eggs are rich in nutrients that may help lower the risk for heart disease.
- **Talk** to your health care provider if you smoke. Smoking cessation medications, nicotine replacement therapy and psychotherapy have all been shown to help even hard-core smokers quit.
- **Be** good to yourself. Eat well, lower your stress, sleep well and get exercise. It's the best heart healthy strategy there is.



# CONTROLLING CHOLESTEROL



## AN EASY-TO-FOLLOW GUIDE



## THE TRUTH ABOUT CHOLESTEROL



You know cholesterol can be bad for you. This soft, waxy fat substance can narrow arteries and restrict or block blood flow to the heart. People with high blood cholesterol have a greater chance of getting heart disease.

We also need cholesterol — it helps form cell membranes, hormones and other important substances. Your liver produces almost all the cholesterol your body needs. In some people, the body produces too much cholesterol but for the majority, dietary cholesterol and fat are the main culprits in raising cholesterol levels.

This brochure will tell you how to keep your cholesterol under control.

## A Word About Good & Bad

Cholesterol can't dissolve in the blood, so it is carried to and from cells by packages called lipoproteins. **There are two major kinds:**

### THE GOOD

- High-density lipoproteins (HDL) carry cholesterol back to the liver, where it is passed from the body. **HDL cholesterol** is good because it is thought to sweep cholesterol from the arteries. **The higher your HDL levels, the better.**

### THE BAD

- Low-density lipoproteins (LDL) carry cholesterol from the liver to the rest of the body. **LDL cholesterol** is bad because it tends to build up on arterial walls and can clog arteries. **The lower your LDL levels, the better.**

Another kind of bad blood fat worth watching: **triglycerides**. High triglyceride levels are linked to heart disease and diabetes.

## Am I at Risk?

Anyone can have high cholesterol levels, but certain groups are at higher risk. Taking the test on the facing panel can help you further determine your risk of high cholesterol.

STEP  
**1**

## Eat the Right Stuff

Base your diet on plant foods. Research shows that a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds helps lower total cholesterol and LDL levels better than other low-fat diets.

**Get plenty of soluble fibre.** It helps lower cholesterol. **Top choices:** kidney beans, Brussels sprouts, oats and skin-on apples and pears.

### Load up on cholesterol-free foods.

Cholesterol is only found in food of animal origin (including fish), never in plants and legumes. Cereals, breads, pasta and other whole-grain products contain no cholesterol.



### Choose healthy oils for cooking.

Monounsaturated types such as olive or canola oil and polyunsaturated varieties such as corn or soybean oil contain little saturated fat. Plus, they may actually lower LDL and raise HDL levels.

**Add fish to the menu.** Many kinds of fish contain heart-healthy polyunsaturated fat (omega-3), especially salmon. But avoid shrimp and squid; limit shellfish such as lobster.

**Go lean.** Opt for lean cuts of meat and poultry (remove the skin), and fat-free or 1-percent milk dairy products rather than whole-milk dairy products.

STEP  
**2**

## Limit the Wrong Stuff

**CURB** your intake of saturated fats in animal foods. Limit fatty red meats, butter, whole milk and cheeses.

**GO EASY** on high-fat processed meats such as bologna, sausage and hot dogs.

**WATCH** for trans fats, a type of fat found in processed foods such as stick margarines, vegetable shortening, fried foods and salad dressings. Trans fats raise LDL cholesterol levels. **Clue:** Look for the words "partially hydrogenated" vegetable oil or "hydrogenated" oil in the ingredients list.

**LIMIT** packaged baked goods such as cookies, crackers and cake. They're the most likely food to contain trans fats.

## Cholesterol Goals at a Glance

Total Cholesterol	Less than 5.2 mmol/L
LDL Cholesterol	Less than 3.5 mmol/L
HDL Cholesterol	Higher than 1.0 mmol/L for men Higher than 1.3 mmol/L for women
Total Cholesterol/ HDL-Cholesterol Ratio	Less than 5.0 mmol/L
Triglycerides	Less than 1.7 mmol/L

STEP  
**3**

## Do the Right Things

**READ** nutrition labels for cholesterol amounts. Minimize consumption of foods with cholesterol.

**MAINTAIN** a healthy weight. Excess pounds raise your risk of heart disease.

**DON'T** smoke. Smoking cigarettes lowers HDL cholesterol levels.

**TAKE** any prescribed cholesterol medicines as directed, and remember that these medicines work best when coupled with cutting fat and exercising more.

**ASK** your provider about getting your cholesterol checked if you are age 20 or older. If you have no risks, regular testing begins for men at age 40 and for women at age 50 or if they are postmenopausal. Those with high cholesterol or other risk factors for heart disease may need more frequent testing.

STEP  
**4**

## Make the Right Moves

**Stay physically active.** Regular physical activity for 30 to 60 minutes daily on most days of the week may raise healthy HDL.

**Choose a time.** Exercise at the same time every day to make it part of your routine.

**Inject activity into everything you do.** Take the stairs, walk to the store — even hide the remote and get up to change channels.

