

Know Your Numbers

All healthy adults age 20 and older should have a blood cholesterol screening at least once every five years. **Where to get tested:** doctors' offices, health fairs and drugstores.

Levels at a Glance (in mg/dL)

	Desirable	Borderline	Watch Out
Total:	Less than 200	200 – 239	240 or above
LDL:	100 – 129	130 – 159	160 or above
HDL:	60 or higher	41 – 59	Less than 40
Triglycerides:	Under 150	150 – 199	200 or above

Important: If you are at high risk of a heart attack, it is recommended that you reduce LDL cholesterol levels to less than 70 mg/dL. You are considered to be at high risk if you have had a heart attack, bypass surgery or angioplasty; you have angina, diabetes or narrowed blood vessels; or you have multiple heart disease risk factors such as obesity and smoking. An LDL level of 100 mg/dL or lower is considered optimal for everyone.

More Cholesterol Lowering Tips

Sneak exercise into your routine.

Idea: Work in the yard or garden, climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator, or get off the bus one or two stops early and walk the rest of the way.

Watch for hidden fats in processed foods.

How: Check food labels for hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated ingredients.

Pick whipped or tub margarine over the stick variety. Why:

The softer the margarine, the less saturated (hydrogenated) fat it probably contains.

Think twice before buying bakery items made with large amounts of fat. Examples: croissants, doughnuts, butter rolls, muffins, coffee cake and Danish pastry.



CONTROLLING YOUR CHOLESTEROL

Simple Steps to Low-Cholesterol Living

CHOLESTEROL HAS A BAD NAME

The truth is that cholesterol is essential to life. This soft, waxy substance helps transport fat through your blood vessels and is used to form cell membranes, some hormones and other vital tissues. Your body produces cholesterol naturally, but a diet rich in saturated fats elevates cholesterol levels in your bloodstream. High blood cholesterol levels raise your risk of developing heart disease. High cholesterol doesn't have obvious symptoms, so no matter what shape you're in, it's important to have your cholesterol tested and to take steps to maintain an optimal range.

Where Does Cholesterol Come From?

Your liver produces almost all the cholesterol your body needs. You also get cholesterol from "animal" foods, such as meats, poultry, fish, seafood and dairy products. Too much cholesterol can stick to blood vessel walls, narrowing arteries and slowing down or blocking blood flow to vital organs, such as the heart and brain. This cholesterol buildup can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Keeping Cholesterol in Check

Eat Right

LIMIT fatty red meats, butter, cream, whole milk and cheeses.

GO for fruits, vegetables and whole grains, which are naturally low in fat. **Benefit:** You'll likely eat fewer calories, control or even lose weight, and lower your cholesterol.

AVOID egg yolks, shrimp, squid and organ meats such as liver.

FILL up on starch and fiber such as oat and barley bran, peas, beans, potatoes, yams, breads and cereals.

COOK smart. Microwave, steam, poach, broil or bake. Trim fat from meats and skin from poultry.

USE oils sparingly. Choose olive oil, canola oil, corn oil or soybean oil because they contain little saturated fat.

RESTRICT alcohol to no more than 1-2 drinks a day if you drink.



Live Right

KEEP MOVING. Exercise raises HDL levels (the good cholesterol) and lowers LDL levels.

CONTROL OTHER HEART DISEASE RISKS, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. **How:** Be active, watch what you eat, control your weight, take medication if prescribed and get regular health checkups.

DON'T SMOKE. Smoking is known to lower HDL levels plus raise your risk of heart attack, stroke and cancer. **Fact:** Quitting can cut your risk of heart attack by 50-70% within five years.

REDUCE STRESS. Relaxation can be a lifesaver, since people who overreact to stressful situations seem more likely to have heart trouble.

HELP YOUR MEDICATION help you. If your doctor prescribes a cholesterol-lowering drug, be sure to also continue with the other cholesterol-controlling steps. Doing so may reduce the amount of medication you need and help the medication do a better job for you.