

High Cholesterol

High cholesterol is a serious risk factor for heart disease. If you have it, you have no symptoms and won't know that it is high unless you have a blood test. If untreated, cholesterol can block your arteries and stop the blood supply to the heart. This may lead to hypertension (high blood pressure), atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), or even a heart attack.

What is Cholesterol?

A fatty, waxy substance made by your liver and used to build cell walls and form hormones. It is found in foods from animal sources only.

What causes it to be high?

- Your body makes too much
- You eat foods high in cholesterol and saturated fats (fats usually solid at room temperature and are usually from animals)
- Being overweight
- Family history
- Lack of exercise

Get Tested!

Who: Everyone age 20 and over

When: Once every 5 years, unless it is high

By Whom: Doctors, nurses, trained medical personnel

LDL Cholesterol	<100	Optimal
	100-129	Near optimal/above optimal
	130-159	Borderline high
	160-189	High
	≥190	Very high
Total Cholesterol	<200	Desirable
	200-239	Borderline high
	≥240	High
HDL Cholesterol	<40	Low for men
	<50	Low for women
	≥60	Desirable

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.
For more information: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep

What It Means:

A normal total cholesterol level is <200 mg. The test also measures the HDL (good) cholesterol which can clean your arteries as well as the LDL (bad) cholesterol which can block the arteries.

*The Total Cholesterol: HDL ratio is the component of your body's total cholesterol made up of the good cholesterol—it tells you your estimated risk for developing heart disease.

If you also have high blood pressure, family history of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, are physically inactive, or you smoke, your risk for developing heart disease is even greater.

What You Can Do If It's High:

- ◆ **Lose weight if overweight.**
- ◆ **Exercise.** Physical activity can help you lose body fat and raise the HDL (good) cholesterol. Aim for 20-30 minutes, three times per week.
- ◆ **Eat less fat.** Read food labels and cut down on the amount of fat you're getting from meats, milk and cheese.
- ◆ **Avoid frying food.** Try baking, broiling, grilling or pan-frying.
- ◆ **Eat more fruits,** vegetables, complex carbohydrates (like potatoes, rice, pasta, and fiber).
- ◆ **Reduce other risks by:** Quitting smoking, controlling high blood pressure, and reduce the stress in your life.

Note: This educational information is not intended to substitute for expert health and medical advice or treatment. The information is designed to help you make informed choices about your health. Please consult your medical professional for questions or information that is specific to your medical condition.