

ALL ABOUT CHOLESTEROL

Do you know your NUMBERS?

Cholesterol moves through your body in packages called *lipoproteins*, made from lipids (fat and cholesterol) and protein. It is the only way lipids (fat and cholesterol) can be transported in your body.

The more saturated fat you eat, the more lipoprotein packages your liver produces and releases into your blood, and the greater the risk of cholesterol buildup in your artery walls.

Two major types of cholesterol (lipoproteins) are found in the blood:

1. High-density lipoproteins (HDL)
2. Low-density lipoproteins (LDL)

Bad Cholesterol

LDL cholesterol (referred to hereafter as *bad cholesterol*) constitute the majority of the cholesterol in your blood. Fat and cholesterol are deposited in your body by bad cholesterol lipoproteins. If your bad cholesterol level is high, your risk of coronary heart disease is increased. High bad cholesterol levels need to be lowered. National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommendations suggest that LDL cholesterol levels for high-risk individuals should be less than 100 mg/dL. For very high-risk individuals the level should be lowered to 70 mg/dL or lower.

In addition to lifestyle changes in nutrition, physical activity, and weight control, drug therapy is recommended to lower LDL levels in high-risk patients with a current LDL in excess

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance present in cell membranes.

of 130 and very high-risk patients with an LDL higher than 100.

Moderately high-risk individuals are those who have two or more risk factors for coronary heart disease and a 10 to 20 percent risk of heart attack within 10

years. The new recommendations suggest a goal of 100 for LDL levels and in addition to lifestyle changes in nutrition, physical activity, and weight control, the use of drug therapy to help reach that level.

Good Cholesterol

HDL (hereafter referred to as good cholesterol) is protective to the body. Good cholesterol lipoproteins remove excess cholesterol from artery walls and return it to your liver for reprocessing. Good cholesterol levels should be raised. Exercise and good eating habits can raise good cholesterol levels. Your body produces all the cholesterol it needs.

Triglycerides

Triglycerides are fats in the blood and come from the food you eat. Triglyceride levels will vary with what you eat. High amounts of fat (triglycerides) in the blood put you at increased risk for heart disease. High

triglyceride levels are most often found in people who are overweight.

Lipids are all the fatty substances, including cholesterol and triglycerides, present in blood and body tissues.

American Heart Association. 2010.



WHAT SHOULD YOUR NUMBERS BE?

Total Cholesterol	Category
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable; lower risk for heart disease.
200 to 239 mg/dL	Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above	High; more than twice the risk of heart disease as someone whose cholesterol is below 200 mg/dL.
HDL Cholesterol	Category
60 mg/dL and above	Desirable; considered protective against heart disease
Men: Less than 40 mg/dL Women: Less than 50 mg/dL	Low. A major risk factor for heart disease.
LDL Cholesterol	Category
Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
100 to 129 mg/dL	Near or above optimal
130 to 159 mg/dL	Borderline high
160 to 189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL and above	Very high
Triglyceride	Category
Less than 150 mg/dL	Normal
150–199 mg/dL	Borderline high
200–499 mg/dL	High
500 mg/dL and above	Very high

**Your LDL cholesterol goal depends on how many other risk factors you have.*

Ask your doctor for a cholesterol test and know your numbers!

