

MANAGING HIGH CHOLESTEROL

High Blood Cholesterol and Heart Disease



Most of the cholesterol in the bloodstream is manufactured by our livers. Additional cholesterol is introduced into the bloodstream by eating foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol, such as animal products (eggs, red meat, high-fat dairy products).

Anyone can develop high cholesterol regardless of age, gender or race. Moreover, similar to hypertension, there may not be any symptoms or warning signs of high cholesterol. Most individuals are unaware that their blood cholesterol levels are high until they receive the results of a blood test.

High levels of cholesterol in the blood (200–240 mg/dl for adults) have been associated with the development of cardiovascular diseases leading to heart attacks and strokes (which kill more Americans than all other diseases combined). High blood cholesterol levels may lead to narrowing of the arteries as a result of fatty deposit build-up on the artery wall. These fatty deposits may eventually prevent blood from flowing to the heart or brain resulting in a heart attack or stroke.

If you score:

5 or more YES answers = You should speak with your physician about your cholesterol level and lifestyle habits.

3 – 4 YES answers = Concentrate on changing those YES answers to NO answers and speak with your physician.

2 or fewer YES answers = Congratulations for paying close attention to your health!

Are You at Risk for High Cholesterol?

1.	Does your brother, sister, mother or father have high cholesterol levels?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Do you regularly eat foods that contain saturated fats such as animal products, cocoa butter, coconut oil or palm oil?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Do you regularly eat hydrogenated fats found in vegetable oil, margarine and processed foods?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Do you regularly eat foods high in cholesterol and fat such as eggs, whole milk dairy products and meats?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Are you overweight by 20 pounds or more?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Do you avoid foods high in fiber such as carrots, oat bran, beans, fruits and vegetables?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Are you unaware of your blood cholesterol level?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in the bloodstream and is an essential part of our cells.

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Good and Bad Cholesterol

Cholesterol is not dissolved in the bloodstream but is carried through the body by transporters called lipoproteins.

LDL (Low Density Lipoprotein) = “Bad” Cholesterol
HDL (High Density Lipoprotein) = “Good” Cholesterol

Cholesterol transported by a carrier called LDL (bad) cholesterol is associated with the formation of fatty

deposits in the arteries. These fatty deposits can clog the arteries that supply blood to the heart and brain, which can result in a heart attack or stroke.

Cholesterol transported by a carrier called HDL (good) cholesterol removes excess cholesterol from the bloodstream, thus reducing the risk of coronary heart disease and/or stroke. The level of LDL cholesterol in your blood and the ratio of HDL cholesterol-to-total cholesterol can determine your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Recommendations for Adults*	
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
≥ 60	High

* ATPIII Classification of LDL, Total Cholesterol and HDL Cholesterol (mg/dL)

Source: National Cholesterol Education Program. ATPIII Guidelines at a Glance. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. National Institutes of Health. Bethesda, MD. 2001. NIH Publication No. 01-3305.

Screening Recommendations*	
Lipid Testing	Routine screening beginning at age 20 if other risk factors for coronary heart disease exist. Routine screening for males age 35 and older and females age 45 and older.

* PacifiCare Preventive Health Recommendations for 2006

Source: American Heart Association, *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics*, 2005 Update

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