

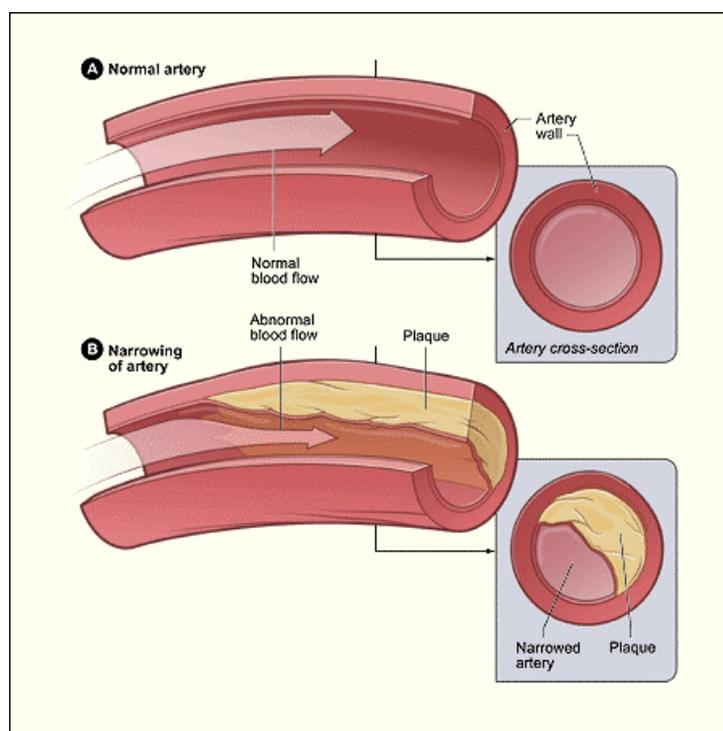
A Guide to Cholesterol

Did you know...?

- Women over the age of 55 tend to have higher cholesterol levels than men.
- High total cholesterol (over 240) can increase your chance of having heart disease.
- Diabetes, obesity, and physical inactivity can lead to heart disease.

What is Cholesterol?

- Cholesterol is a fat-like material in your blood. Your body makes its own cholesterol. When you eat foods that have lots of fat or cholesterol, you can have too much cholesterol in your blood.
- When there is too much cholesterol, it builds up in the walls of your arteries. If too much cholesterol builds up, the arteries become narrowed and blood flow to the heart is slowed down or blocked (see picture).
- The blood carries oxygen to the heart, and if enough blood and oxygen cannot reach your heart, you may suffer chest pain. If the blood supply to a portion of the heart is completely cut off by a blockage, the result is a heart attack.



Not all cholesterol is bad.

- HDL (high-density lipoprotein) is “GOOD” cholesterol
 - HDL helps keep cholesterol from building up in the arteries
 - Protects against heart disease
- LDL (low-density lipoprotein) is “BAD” cholesterol
 - LDL causes the build up or blockages in arteries, increasing your risk of heart disease and stroke
 - Can cause heart disease

When should you be checked?

- If you are 20 years and older
- If you have a family history of heart disease
- If you are a man over age 35
- If you are a woman over age 45

What do your cholesterol numbers mean?

- Total Cholesterol
- Normal: <200 mg/dl
- Borderline High: 200-239 mg/dl (recheck in 1-2 months)
- High: >240 mg/dl (recheck in 1-2 months)
- HDL
- Very Desirable: >50 mg/dL for men
>60 mg/dL for women
- Desirable: >40 mg/dL for men
>50 mg/dL for women
- Undesirable: <40 mg/dL for men (recheck in 1-2 months)
<50 mg/dL for women (recheck in 1-2 months)

Possible Reasons for High Cholesterol	Suggestions for Improvement
High cholesterol often runs in families	Teach other family members to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
Diet high in saturated (red meat, whole milk, ice cream, cheeses, butter) and trans fats (french fries, doughnuts and other pastries)	<p>The “bad” fats--saturated and trans fats—increase the risk for certain diseases. The “good” fats—monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats—lower disease risk.</p> <p>Limit saturated fats and avoid trans fats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drink skim milk instead of whole milk. ● Consume low fat cheeses instead of cheeses made from whole milk ● Eat higher fiber foods like fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds. ● Eat more fish and skinless chicken breasts and less red meat. ● Grill, steam, broil or lightly stir fried foods instead of frying foods. ● Use canola oil and olive oil instead of butter
Excess body weight	<p>Excess body weight is linked with high cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol, and higher risk of heart disease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Try to lose weight, if overweight. Even a small amount of weight loss can help lower your bad cholesterol.
Lack of regular exercise	<p>Exercise has been shown to increase HDL cholesterol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exercise at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
Smoking	<p>Quitting smoking will raise your HDL and decrease your risk of heart attack and stroke!</p>

*Resources
 -Food and Drug Administration, Office of Women’s Health, Cholesterol handout
 -University of Michigan Health System, Cholesterol Patient Education Handout
 -Harvard School of Public Health, The Nutrition Source, Fats and Cholesterol
 -American Heart Association, What your Cholesterol Levels Mean