

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that is carried in the bloodstream. It is made in your liver and can be obtained from some foods. Your body requires a certain amount of cholesterol. Too much cholesterol can cause plaque build-up in blood vessels, which can lead to hardening of blood vessels and raise your risk for a heart attack, stroke, or other health issues.

LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol: Also known as “lousy” cholesterol. Too much LDL cholesterol may cause build-up in your blood vessels.

HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol: Also known as “healthy” cholesterol. This can act as a “clean-up crew” to get rid of excess LDL cholesterol in the bloodstream.

Triglycerides: A form of energy storage in the body. Triglycerides are often measured in a blood test along with cholesterol levels. However, just like LDL cholesterol, high triglycerides may lead to build-up in your blood vessels.

Take charge of your health

While some risk factors for high cholesterol cannot be changed, such as family history, there are other factors that can be controlled. Eat a healthy diet and get regular exercise. Quit smoking and take steps to control high blood pressure and high blood sugar. If your doctor has put you on any medication for high cholesterol, take them as prescribed.

What are your most recent cholesterol levels?

Total Cholesterol: _____

HDL Cholesterol: _____

LDL Cholesterol: _____

Triglycerides: _____

Nutrition Tips to Improve Cholesterol and Triglyceride Levels

Eat less saturated fat and trans fat. Limit high-fat meats, poultry skin, bacon, sausage, whole milk, cream, butter, stick margarine, shortening, fried foods, and partially hydrogenated oils.

Eat more unsaturated fat, including omega-3 fatty acids. Eat fish twice a week, such as salmon, tuna, mackerel, and cod. Other ideas include nuts, seeds, avocados, and liquid vegetable oil such as olive oil.

Get 25 to 30 grams of dietary fiber every day. Fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, and whole grains like oats, brown rice, and quinoa are good sources of fiber.

Limit added sugars. Items that may be high in added sugar include sweet drinks, candy, cakes, cookies, cereal, and packaged snacks. Added sugar also includes white sugar, brown sugar, honey, and syrup.



Reduce alcohol. The American Heart Association recommends that men drink no more than two alcoholic beverages per day and women drink no more than one alcoholic beverage per day. One drink equals 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1 ½ oz. spirits.

Achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Carrying excess weight can contribute to high lipid levels. Talk with your healthcare team or a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) to come up with a healthy plan for weight loss.