

# High Cholesterol

## What To Know



**High levels of Cholesterol may create fatty deposits that block blood from flowing freely through your blood vessels. There are measures you can take to improve your cholesterol.**

### Not all Cholesterol is Bad

Blood cholesterol is essential for good health. Your body needs it to perform important jobs, such as making hormones and digesting fatty foods. Cholesterol travels through the blood by attaching to proteins called a lipoproteins. There are two cholesterol types:

- Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) - "Bad": delivers cholesterol to the body and builds up in the walls of your arteries, making them hard and narrow
- High-density lipoprotein (HDL) - "Good": picks up excess cholesterol and takes it back to your liver

High levels of LDL, or "bad" cholesterol, can harm your health and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke, while HDL, or "good" cholesterol, lowers your risk.

### Prevent High Cholesterol

- ✓ Eat a low-salt diet that is high in fruit, vegetables, and whole grains
- ✓ Limit animal fats and use good fats in moderation
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight if recommended
- ✓ Quit smoking
- ✓ Exercise on most days of the week for at least 30 minutes
- ✓ Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all

### Optimal Cholesterol Levels\* Measured in mg/dL of blood

Total Cholesterol	About 150
LDL cholesterol	About 100
HDL cholesterol	At least 40 in men and 50 in women

These guidelines are provided by the American Heart Association (AHA) and are not intended to be substituted for advice given by a physician or licensed health-care professional.

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Content sourced from the AHA Prevention and Treatment of High Cholesterol <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol/prevention-and-treatment-of-high-cholesterol-hyperlipidemia>  
\*Source from Center for Disease Control and Prevention Getting your Cholesterol Checked <https://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/about/index.html>

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EHCGRH-001-024