MCC-Penn Valley
Health Careers
Nursing Programs
Exercise

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CHOLSTEROL

Total Cholesterol Level

- Less than 200 mg/dl — desirable
- 200-239 mg/dl — borderline high
- 240 mg/dl or higher — high

Total cholesterol is the level of all of the lipids in your blood, including your LDL-cholesterol and HDL-cholesterol. Generally, a lower total cholesterol level is better.

HDL- Cholesterol

- 60 mg/dL or higher — high
- Less than 40 mg/dL — low

HDL-cholesterol is considered the "GOOD" cholesterol. It is the "HAPPY" cholesterol. Generally, a higher HDL-cholesterol level is better.

LDL-Cholesterol

- Less than 100 mg/dL — optimal
- 100-129 mg/dL — near-optimal/above optimal
- 130-159 mg/dL — borderline high
- 160-189 mg/dL — high
- 190 mg/dL or higher — very high

LDL-cholesterol is considered the "BAD" cholesterol. This is the "LOUSY" cholesterol. If you have too much, it can lead to plaque buildup in your arteries. Generally a lower LDL-cholesterol is better.

Functions of Cholesterol

- Builds and maintains cell membranes
- Involved in the production of sex hormones
- Essential for the production of hormones
- Converts sunshine to vitamin D
- Important for the metabolism vitamins A,D, E, and K
- Insulates the nerve fibers

Symptoms

Symptoms of high cholesterol do not exist in a way a person or doctor can identify by touch or sight. Symptoms of high cholesterol are revealed if you have symptoms of atherosclerosis. These symptoms can include:

- Narrowed coronary arteries (a disease called angina)
- Angina when exercising (because the arteries that supply the heart have narrowed)
- Blood clots (which cause heart attacks or strokes when blood flow is blocked or the clots break)
- Ruptured plaques (this can lead to a slow healing in size of the arteries that delivery blood to the heart (slow coronary blood flow))
- Buildup in blood vessels (which can also decrease blood flow)

Lifestyle Causes

- Diet
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Bodyweight
- Smoking
- Alcohol

Medical Conditions

These medical conditions are known to cause LDL levels to rise.

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Kidney diseases
- Liver diseases
- Underactive thyroid

Fixed Risk Factors

- Your genes: people with close family members who have had either coronary disease or a stroke, have a greater risk of high blood cholesterol levels
- Your sex: men have a greater chance of having high blood cholesterol levels than women
- Your age: as you get older your chances of developing atherosclerosis increases
- Early menopause: women after menopause women early are more susceptible to higher cholesterol levels
- Certain Ethnic Groups: (Hispanic American, African American)

Lifestyle Changes to Lower Cholesterol

- Lose weight
- Eat heart healthy foods
- Exercise daily
- Quit smoking
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Manage stress

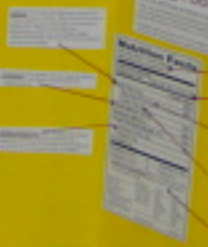
5 Foods to Lower Cholesterol

- Oatmeal
- Fish
- Walnuts, almonds, other nuts
- Olive oil
- Foods with added plant sterols or stanols

LOSE

- Fatty red meats
- Bacon
- Organ meats
- Butter and lard
- Foods with tropical oils such as coconut, palm, or palm kernel
- Whole milk
- Whole milk yogurt, cheeses, and ice cream
- Foods high in saturated fats and/or trans fats

Reading Food Labels



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