



Cholesterol

What Is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance made in the liver and found in your body's cells and among the lipids in the bloodstream. Your body needs some cholesterol to produce hormones and form cell membranes, but a high level of cholesterol can cause heart disease.

Types of Cholesterol

- Low-density lipoproteins (LDL): If too much LDL, known as "bad" cholesterol, circulates in the blood it can form plaque on the walls of the arteries and increase the risk of heart disease.
- High-density lipoproteins (HDL): A high level of HDL "good" cholesterol can protect against heart attack. HDL helps move excess cholesterol away from the arteries to the liver for disposal.

People with high LDL cholesterol and low HDL cholesterol levels often have high triglycerides. Triglycerides are a form of fat that can be controlled with lifestyle changes.

Getting Tested

It is important to schedule a cholesterol screening to determine if you have cholesterol problems. A complete fasting lipoprotein profile will show:

- Your total blood (or serum) cholesterol level
- Your HDL (good) cholesterol level
- Your LDL (bad) cholesterol level
- Your triglyceride level

The American Heart Association recommends the following levels measured in milligrams per deciliter of blood (mg/dL):

Total Blood Cholesterol Levels

- Normal—Less than 200 mg/dL
- Borderline-High Risk—200-239 mg/dL
- High Risk—240 mg/dL and over

HDL (good) Cholesterol Levels

- Normal—60 mg/dL
- High Risk—Less than 40 mg/dL (men), less than 50 mg/dL (women)

LDL (bad) Cholesterol Levels

- Normal—Less than 100 mg/dL
- Near Normal—100-129 mg/dL
- Borderline High—130-159 mg/dL
- High—160-189 mg/dL
- Very High—190 mg/dL and above

Triglyceride Levels

- Normal—Less than 150 mg/dL
- Borderline High—150-199 mg/dL
- High—200-499 mg/dL
- Very High—500 mg/dL

Wellness