

# What You Need to Know About Cholesterol



Your body makes cholesterol and you get it from food as well. Cholesterol is a soft, fat-like substance found in the blood and in all the body's cells. Too much of it cause a build-up in your arteries. Over time, cholesterol hardens and turns into plaque. The accumulation of plaque can narrow the artery walls and reduce blood flow, which can cause blocks that can lead to blood clots, heart attacks or strokes.

You might be surprised to learn that your body actually needs cholesterol to function normally and to stay healthy. But what we need to remember is that our bodies are fully capable of making all the cholesterol it needs. It's what you put into your body (yes, we mean those salty snacks and baked goods), and in some cases your family health history that causes trouble.

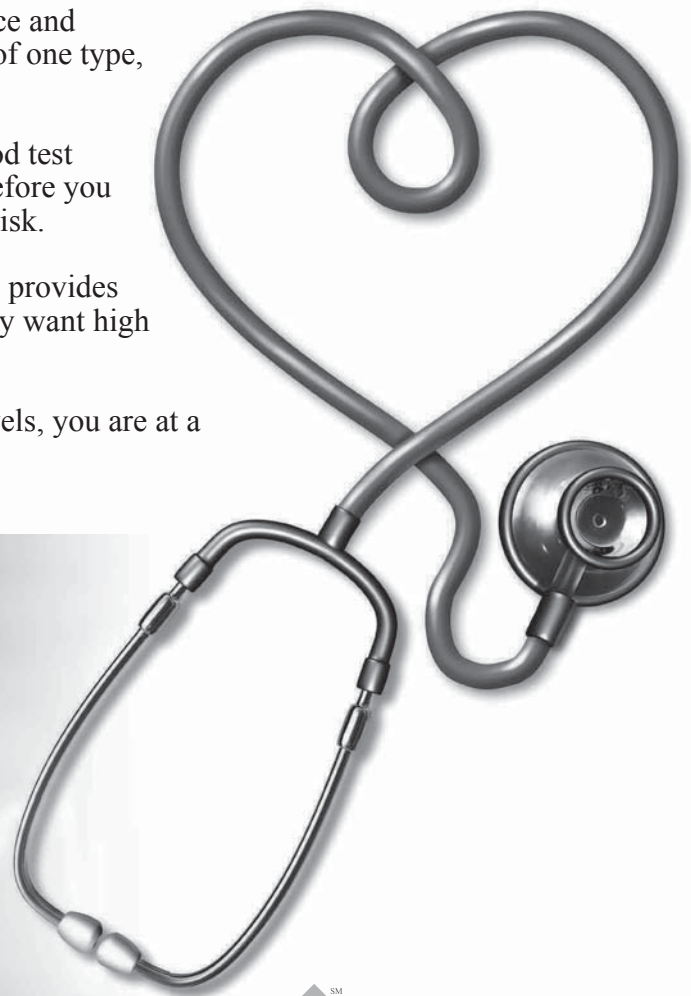
Unfortunately, high cholesterol does not give any warning signs, so it is important to get your blood cholesterol tested from time to time. And, all cholesterol is not created equally.

There are two types: good and bad. Understanding the difference and knowing the levels of each in your blood is critical. Too much of one type, or not enough of another, can put you at risk.

The screening is called a Lipoprotein Profile. It is a simple blood test ordered by your doctor. It is important to fast for 8-12 hours before you get this test. Your testing schedule is based on your individual risk.

The Lipoprotein Profile provides your Total Cholesterol. It also provides the individual LDL, HDL, and Triglyceride levels. You typically want high HDL numbers, and low LDL and Triglyceride numbers.

If you have high LDL and Triglyceride levels and low HDL levels, you are at a greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease.



# STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

## 1 LEARN about your risk of heart attack or stroke



- Are you overweight?
- Do you exercise?  
How healthy are your eating habits?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you have diabetes?
- Does heart disease run in your family?
- Do you smoke?

## 2 TALK to your doctor



- Have you had your cholesterol checked lately?
- What is your risk for heart disease?
- What are your cholesterol numbers (HDL, LDL, Triglycerides)?
- What are your goals for your cholesterol numbers?
- What can you do to improve your numbers?

## 3 Accept change and take ACTION

- Keep a daily diary or log to see what you could improve:
  - *Log your weight*
  - *Record what you eat (meals and snacks)*
  - *Record your exercise (what type and how long)*
  - *Note relevant comments (It was raining out so I didn't take my walk, I ate a smaller dinner last night, I lost 2 pounds)*
  - *Review what you wrote to see what you could change*
- Make **CHANGES**
  - *Follow your doctor's diet advice. (Cut out certain foods or snacks high in carbohydrates and fats)*
  - *Ramp up your physical exercise routine daily (Walk more frequently or for longer periods, park farther away from the stores, go the gym)*
  - *Lose weight*
  - *Take your prescribed medications*
  - *Stop smoking*



Review your diary or log frequently. You will be surprised to see how many changes you did make or where else you can make changes. You'll feel better and it will encourage you to continue with your plan.

Start small and work your way up if it is easier for you. Even small changes can help. Compare your next cholesterol results to the changes you made and see how much progress you made in lowering your heart disease risk.

There are also prescription medicines you can take that help lower your cholesterol levels. Discuss with your doctor whether this is a good option for you. Make an appointment today to get your blood cholesterol screening, and stay on top of your levels!

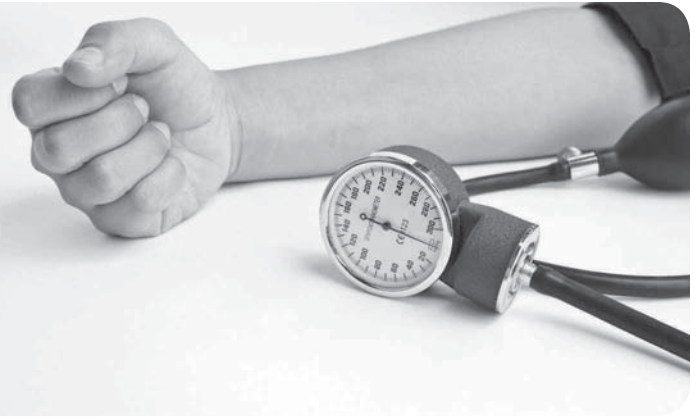
**For more information about high blood cholesterol, visit:**

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute:  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>

**For more resources about dealing with Diabetes, visit:**

American Diabetes Association:  
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# What Does High Blood Pressure Really Mean?



You have probably had your blood pressure checked before. Do you know what the results mean? Here are tips to help you understand the meaning behind the numbers. Also, what you can do if your numbers are high:

- Blood pressure is measured in two numbers.
- The top number is your **Systolic** pressure. This number measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats.
- The bottom number is your **Diastolic** pressure. This measures the pressure in the arteries when your heart rests in between heartbeats.
- The top number should be higher than the bottom number.
- Normal blood pressure levels for adults are less than 120/80.

Systolic → 117  
Diastolic → 76 mm Hg

The following chart shows the different blood pressure categories:

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic (Upper Number)		Diastolic (Lower Number)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
High Blood Pressure Stage 2	160 or Higher	or	100 or Higher
Extremely High Blood Pressure (Emergency care needed)	180 or Higher	or	110 or Higher

Source: American Heart Association; [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

High blood pressure causes the heart to work harder. This is the number one risk factor for a stroke. High blood pressure must be monitored. It can be treated by medication and/or lifestyle changes.

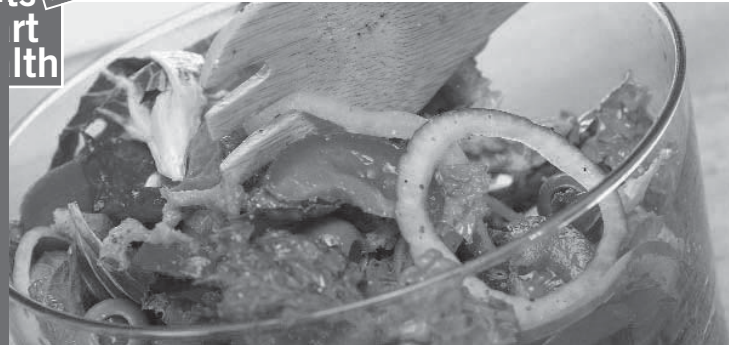
**There are many things you can do to lower your blood pressure if your numbers are too high:**

- Getting regular exercise
- Eating a healthy and balanced diet
- Quitting smoking
- Limit consumption of alcohol

Ask your doctor about a program that will help you to quit smoking. Tell your doctor about all medications and supplements you take because some medications and supplements can increase your blood pressure. There are medicines that can help if lifestyle changes alone do not lower your blood pressure. Your doctor can advise you of the best medication for you.

You should schedule regular check-ups with your doctor so he or she can help you keep your blood pressure in control.

# A healthy diet... it's easier than you think!



## Make a healthy diet a heart-healthy habit

Eating healthy foods can be good for your heart. Try to:

- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk products.
- Drink fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Eat lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- Avoid saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars.
- Eat fish—especially oily fish such as salmon, tuna, or trout—at least twice a week.
- Eat fresh foods that are steamed, baked, grilled, broiled, or stir-fried.
- Eat slowly, enjoy your food, and learn when you feel full.

## Follow more heart-healthy habits

- Do not shop for food when you are hungry. If you do, you may make poor food choices. Make a shopping list before you go to the store and stick to it.
- If you need to lose weight, set goals you can reach.
- Keep a food diary to see when and how much you eat.
- Limit alcohol.

## Make healthier food choices

### If you usually...

Eat a cookie for dessert

Deep-fry your chicken

Use salt to season your food

Drink regular soda

Drink whole milk

Eat everything on your plate in a restaurant

### Try this instead...

Eat an apple

Grill or broil your chicken

Season your food with herbs, spices, or lemon

Drink water or flavored water

Drink low-fat or fat-free milk

Cut your portion in half and take the rest home

Talk with your doctor or dietitian about a healthy eating plan that is right for you.  
Ask about other heart-healthy changes you can make.

# Be more active... for heart health!



## Make activity a heart-healthy habit

If you have or are at risk for heart disease, you may need to be more active. Physical activity may help you keep from getting heart disease, delay its onset, or even improve your condition. But before starting an exercise program, talk to your doctor about what level of activity is right for you.

For many people, your goal should be 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise on most or all days. Getting into this heart-healthy habit may be easier than you think! You can:

- Walk a mile in 15 minutes
- Ride a bicycle
- Play tennis
- Take exercise classes
- Do housework or yard work

## Work up to your goal

After you and your doctor agree what level of exercise is right for you:

- Start with 10 minutes a day, 3 days a week.
- Slowly increase to at least 30 minutes every day.
- If you cannot get 30 minutes all at once, break your activity into smaller time periods.
- Set aside time to be active.
- Choose an activity you enjoy, and keep doing it.

## Think of ways to be more active

### If you often...

Read a magazine during your lunch break

Search for the closest parking space

Take the elevator

Sit at the kitchen table and talk with a friend

Watch TV from your chair or couch

### Try this instead...

Take a walk

Choose a parking space far away from the entrance

Take the stairs

Take a walk with your friend

Ride a stationary bike or walk in place

You may want to track your progress to see how well you are doing. This may help you stay with your program.

This information is not meant to replace your doctor's advice.

Be sure to talk with your doctor about what activities are safe for you.

Ask about healthy eating and other heart-healthy changes you can make.

This material was developed by GlaxoSmithKline.



# Building heart-healthy habits for exercise and diet



## Make changes one step at a time

When you have heart disease, or are at risk for it, it can mean making some changes. Where do you start? You can start by taking a single step. With practice each day, you may find that your heart-healthy *change* has become a heart-healthy *habit*. **Read the tips below.** Check off 1 or more to try.

### Tips for being more active

Aim for 30 minutes of being active each day. Start with 10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes. Before starting any exercise activity, talk with your doctor about physical activity that is safe and right for you.

#### If you often . . .

- Read a magazine during your lunch break
- Search for the parking space closest to the mall
- Take the elevator
- Sit at the kitchen table and talk with a friend

#### Try this instead . . .

- Take a walk
- Choose a parking space far away from the entrance
- Take the stairs
- Take a walk with your friend

### Tips for healthy eating

Try to eat foods that are low in salt. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables as part of your meals and snacks.

#### If you usually . . .

- Eat a cookie for dessert
- Deep-fry your chicken
- Use salt to season your food
- Drink regular soda
- Drink whole milk
- Eat everything on your plate in a restaurant

#### Try this instead . . .

- Eat an apple
- Grill or broil your chicken
- Season your food with herbs, spices, or lemon
- Drink water or seltzer
- Drink low-fat or fat-free milk
- Cut your portion in half. Take the rest home

g heart-healthy changes.

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# Heart-healthy habits



## Your family can help

Making changes to your daily life can help your heart. Sticking to these changes may be easier with the help and support of your family.

Here are some changes that you and your family can make together. Talk with your family about these changes. Then mark the ones you think you want to try.

### Eat healthy foods

- Make a heart-healthy grocery list together before you shop (for example, list fresh fruits and vegetables)
- Share a main course when you eat out
- Ask for fruits or flowers for special occasions instead of sweets or alcohol
- Other ideas:  
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\_\_\_\_\_



### Be active

- Go for a family walk after dinner
- Ask a family member to take an exercise class with you
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Other ideas:  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Be sure to check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.



### Talk with your family

- Bring a family member with you to your doctor visits. He or she can help ask questions and take notes
- Let a family member know what medicines you are taking and at what time. Also, discuss how your doctor told you to take them
- Write down your goals to eat better and become more active. Share them with your family
- Other ideas:  
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\_\_\_\_\_



Healthy changes can be good for everyone!

Talk to your doctor about making heart-healthy changes in your daily life.