

# Health Facts

*for you*

## HEART FACTS

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL	LDL ("BAD")CHOLESTEROL	HDL ("GOOD")CHOLESTEROL	TRIGLYCERIDES
High: above 240 Borderline: 200 to 239 <b>Desirable: below 200</b>	High: 160 or above Borderline: 130 to 159 <b>Desirable: below 130</b> <b>Desirable</b> for people with heart disease, diabetes, or several risk factors: below 100	Low: below 40 <b>Desirable:</b> <b>females 55 or higher</b> <b>males 45 or higher</b>	<b>Desirable: below 150</b>
Cholesterol is a soft waxy substance. Your body uses cholesterol to function normally and to produce certain hormones and other essential substances.	LDLs carry most of the cholesterol in the blood, and if not removed from the blood, they can build up in the arteries contributing to heart disease.	HDLs carry cholesterol back to the liver for processing or removal from the body. HDLs, therefore, help remove cholesterol from the blood, preventing the accumulation of cholesterol in the walls of the arteries. Thus, they are often referred to as good cholesterol.	Triglycerides are a type of fat. The majority of the fats you eat in your diet are in the form of triglycerides. The liver can also make triglycerides after you have eaten too many calories, especially calories from carbohydrates and calories from alcohol.

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL	LDL ("BAD") CHOLESTEROL	HDL ("GOOD") CHOLESTEROL	TRIGLYCERIDES
<p>Cholesterol is present in all parts of the body including the brain and nervous system, muscle, skin, liver, intestines, heart, skeleton, etc. Your body produces cholesterol to meet these needs. Your body can also use the cholesterol in your diet. Cholesterol is found only in animal foods. Cholesterol is not found in plant foods.</p> <p>The cholesterol level of your blood is affected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the cholesterol your body produces</li> <li>- the saturated fat, cholesterol, fiber</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">and total calories in your diet.</p> <p>The total cholesterol in your blood can be tested with a simple finger stick. If the cholesterol level is borderline or high, additional testing for LDL and HDL levels is recommended.</p> <p><b>High blood cholesterol levels increase your risk of heart disease.</b></p>	<p>LDL is the form of cholesterol which can clog your arteries. This is why LDL is often called bad cholesterol.</p> <p>LDL can often be reduced with a low saturated fat, low cholesterol, high fiber diet. Saturated fats are found mainly in high fat dairy products (butter, cheese, whole milk, ice cream), fatty meats (sausage, bacon, prime rib, hot dogs, bologna), and some deep-fried foods. Unsaturated fats found in nuts, peanut butter, olive oil, and canola oil do not raise your LDL level. High fiber foods that can help reduce your LDL include whole grain breads and cereals, oatmeal, barley, vegetables and fruits, and dried peas and beans.</p> <p>Drug therapy may be prescribed if LDL does not respond to diet and lifestyle changes.</p> <p><b>High LDL levels increase your risk of heart disease.</b></p>	<p>If HDLs are low (below 40), it increases your risk for heart disease, even if your total cholesterol is less than 200. You have a lower risk of developing coronary heart disease if your HDLs are high.</p> <p>To help raise HDLs, lose weight, become physically active and quit smoking. Including some unsaturated fats on a daily basis (a handful of nuts or a serving of peanut butter) may also help increase your HDL level.</p> <p><b>The lower your HDLs, the greater your risk for heart disease.</b></p>	<p>Weight loss and regular exercise are the best ways to reduce triglycerides. In addition, avoid most sweet drinks (soda, fruit juice, fruit drinks), reduce the amount of starchy foods (breads, rice, pasta, potato, corn) at meals, and limit sweet snacks or desserts to small servings. Eating several small meals per day rather one or two large meals can also help reduce triglycerides.</p> <p>Limit alcohol intake to no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. One drink is a 12 ounce beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of liquor.</p> <p><b>High triglyceride levels increase your risk of heart disease and very high levels can lead to pancreatitis.</b></p>