

Control Your Cholesterol



Unhealthy cholesterol levels are a risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Too much cholesterol in the blood can collect with calcium and other substances to form plaque. This can clog the walls of the arteries and slow down or block blood flow to the heart or brain. Lowering your cholesterol level can lower your risk for having a heart attack and stroke and may also slow down, reduce, or even stop plaque from building up.

KNOW YOUR CHOLESTEROL NUMBERS

Target Blood Fats (Lipids)*	
Total cholesterol	< 200 mg/dL
LDL (Bad) cholesterol (Helps deposit cholesterol in artery walls)	< 100 mg/dL
HDL (good) cholesterol	> 40mg/dL for men > 50 mg/dL for women
Triglycerides (another blood lipid)	< 150 mg/dL

*Ask your physician what your target levels are.
Target levels are based on all of your heart disease risk factors.

WAYS TO CONTROL CHOLESTEROL

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- Take medications, if prescribed.
 - Aim for a healthy weight.
 - Limit foods with saturated fats. Avoid *trans* fats. These are hydrogenated oils in foods, such as stick margarine and snack foods.
 - Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables and whole grain breads, cereals, and other grains, as well as beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds.
 - Get 20 to 35 grams of dietary fiber a day.
 - Limit added sugars, such as sweetened beverages, candy, and baked goods.
 - Choose small serving sizes of lean beef, pork, lamb, chicken, and turkey.
 - Explore plant-based proteins, such as tofu and legumes.
 - Eat fish 2-3 times a week (especially ones that are high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon).
 - Use nonfat and low-fat dairy (or dairy replacement) products.
 - If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
 - Do regular physical activity.