

# Empower Yourself!

Learn Your Cholesterol Number



NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
NATIONAL HEART, LUNG, AND BLOOD INSTITUTE  
AND OFFICE OF RESEARCH ON MINORITY HEALTH



# Should you be concerned about your blood cholesterol number?

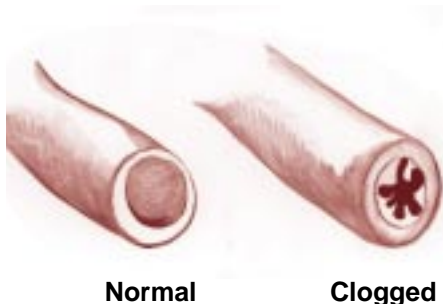
**Y**ES! High blood cholesterol increases your chances for coronary heart disease.

Coronary heart disease is a disease of the blood vessels of the heart that causes a heart attack. It is the number one killer among African Americans. You can take steps to protect your heart! Read this brochure. Improve your cholesterol level or keep it at the right level to help reduce your risk of getting heart disease.



## What is blood cholesterol?

Your body makes all the cholesterol you need. Eating foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol can raise your blood cholesterol level. The higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk for heart disease. Too much cholesterol can lead to clogged arteries. You are then at risk for having a heart attack, a stroke, or poor circulation.





## What are good and bad cholesterol?

**HDL** “good cholesterol” helps clean fat and cholesterol from arteries, carrying it to the liver for removal from the body. **LDL** “bad cholesterol” deposits cholesterol in your arteries and causes them to become clogged.

## Have your blood cholesterol checked.

All adults age 20 and older need to have their blood cholesterol checked at least once every 5 years. Ask your doctor to do a simple test to measure how much HDL and total cholesterol is in your blood.

### Here's what your numbers mean.

#### Total blood cholesterol

<b>Desirable:</b>	<b>Less than 200 mg/dL.</b>	Good for you! Try to keep it below this number.
<b>Borderline:</b>	<b>200-239 mg/dL.</b>	Be on the alert! You are at risk for a heart attack. You need to make changes in your lifestyle.
<b>High:</b>	<b>240 mg/dL or higher.</b>	Danger zone! You have a higher risk for a heart attack. Seek help from your doctor to lower your cholesterol level.
<b>HDL-cholesterol</b>	<b>35 mg/dL or higher.</b>	Being physically active can help raise your HDL.

If the total blood cholesterol number is higher than 200, or if your HDL is lower than 35, your doctor may order blood tests to check your LDL cholesterol level. The test will let you know if you need treatment. Take charge and work with your health provider to lower your risk.



**Here's what your number means.**

**LDL cholesterol**

- Desirable:**        **Less than 130 mg/dL**
- Borderline:**    **130-159 mg/dL**
- High:**            **160 mg/dL or more**

**Take good care of yourself!**

**My cholesterol levels:**        **Recommended goal:**

<b>Total</b> _____	<b>Total</b> _____
<b>HDL</b> _____	<b>HDL</b> _____
<b>LDL</b> _____	<b>LDL</b> _____



# Take action to keep your cholesterol number low. Follow these steps:

## 1. Eat foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

### MEATS, POULTRY, AND FISH

**Instead of:**

High-fat meats

Fatback and bacon

**Try:**

Lean meats, poultry without skin, fish

Bean and grain dishes

Skinless chicken or turkey thighs

### CURED MEATS

**Instead of:**

Pork bacon

Pork sausage, ground beef, and pork

**Try:**

Turkey bacon, lean ham, Canadian bacon (These choices may be high in sodium. Read the label.)

Ground skinless turkey breast

### DAIRY PRODUCTS

**Instead of:**

Whole milk

Whole milk cheeses

Cream, evaporated milk

Sour cream

**Try:**

Skim (nonfat) or 1 percent milk

Low fat or part skim milk cheeses

Evaporated skim milk

Low fat yogurt

### FATS, SPREADS, AND DRESSINGS

**Instead of:**

Lard, butter, shortening

Regular mayonnaise, regular salad dressing

**Try:**

Small amounts of vegetable oil

Mustard and nonfat or low fat types of salad dressing, yogurt, or mayonnaise

## 2. Keep moving.

Do 30 minutes or more of physical activity most days of the week. You can do 10-minute sessions at different times during the day. Choose activities you enjoy. For example:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| walking         | jogging        |
| gardening       | bike riding    |
| climbing stairs | playing sports |




### 3. Maintain a healthy weight.

Take steps to lose weight if you are overweight. Try losing weight slowly.

- Cut back on foods high in fat and calories. Use the food label to choose foods lower in fat and calories.
- Eat smaller portions.
- Eat fruits and vegetables at meals and for snacks.
- Bake, broil, roast, stew, or microwave your food instead of frying.
- Stay active every day.





**Check the steps you will take for a healthy heart.**

- Get my blood cholesterol level checked.
- Talk to my doctor about what my numbers mean.
- Bake chicken without the skin instead of frying it.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, breads, and cereals.
- Eat smaller portions.
- Try to take a 10-minute walk in the morning, at lunch, and after work.



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