

# HDL Cholesterol



## Does this test have other names?

High-density lipoprotein cholesterol

## What is this test?

An HDL cholesterol test measures the amount of high-density lipoprotein (good) cholesterol in your blood. High HDL levels may lower your risk for heart disease.

## Why do I need this test?

You may need this test as part of a routine screening to find out your risk for heart disease.

## What other tests might I have along with this test?

An HDL test is often done as part of a full lipid panel to get a complete picture of your cholesterol and blood fat levels. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, triglycerides, and very-low-density lipoproteins are among the other lipids your healthcare provider may want to measure.

## What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

The normal ranges for HDL cholesterol are:

- 45 to 70 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) for men
- 50 to 90 mg/dL for women

If the test shows that your HDL levels are lower than normal, this may mean you have a higher risk of developing heart disease.

If your HDL level is higher than the normal range, this is good news: HDL helps rid your system of LDL. It helps protect against heart problems such as atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. Researchers think that a level of 60 mg/dL or higher may protect against heart disease.

## How is this test done?

The test is done with a blood sample. A needle is used to draw blood from a vein in your arm or hand.

## Does this test pose any risks?

Having a blood test with a needle carries some risks. These include bleeding, infection, bruising, and feeling lightheaded. When the needle pricks your arm or hand, you may feel a slight sting or pain. Afterward, the site may be sore.

## What might affect my test results?

Having another health condition, such as diabetes or taking certain medicines, can affect the results of an HDL test.

## **How do I get ready for this test?**

Ask your healthcare provider how you should prepare for this test. You don't usually need to do anything before an HDL test. But if you're having a complete lipid panel, you may sometimes be asked to fast for 9 to 12 hours before having the test.

Be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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