



# Cholesterol

## Overview

Most people have heard that high cholesterol is not good for you, but did you know it can increase your risk for heart disease, heart attack or stroke? In fact, about 47 percent of American adults have cholesterol levels that are too high. Make it your mission to fight heart disease by making heart-healthy choices — learn more about cholesterol.

Having too much cholesterol in your blood increases your risk for heart disease and stroke. This happens because cholesterol and other fats can build up, narrow arteries and then be blocked by a blood clot or other particle. This causes the heart or brain to lose its blood supply, resulting in a heart attack or stroke.

You should have your cholesterol levels checked regularly (at least once every five years starting at age 20) because with the help of your healthcare professional, high cholesterol can be controlled.

## What are your cholesterol goals?

Factor	Goal
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL ("Bad") Cholesterol	LDL cholesterol goals vary
	Less than 100 mg/dL      Optimal
	100 to 129 mg/dL      Near Optimal/Above Optimal
	130 to 159 mg/dL      Borderline High
	160 to 189 mg/dL      High
	190 mg/dL and above      Very High
HDL ("Good") Cholesterol	50 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	<150 mg/dL

## Tips for managing cholesterol

- As people get older, gain excess weight or both, their triglyceride levels tend to rise.
- By eating more foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and high in fiber, you have the power to reduce your cholesterol,
- Following the American Heart Association's guidelines for physical activity (at least 150 minutes each week) can help manage your cholesterol levels.

**Learn more about cholesterol and heart disease at [heart.org](http://heart.org).**