

# Cholesterol: Know your Numbers

## What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fat found in our blood and in all of our body's cells. It is also called a lipid.

## What determines our cholesterol numbers?

- + LDL (Low Density Lipoprotein) is the “bad” cholesterol that can clog your arteries and increase the risk of heart disease.
- + HDL (High Density Lipoprotein) is the “good” cholesterol that keeps your arteries clear of buildup and decreases the risk of heart disease.
- + Triglycerides are another type of bad fat that can also clog up our arteries.

A combination of these three numbers can determine your overall risk for heart disease and stroke. This is done by a blood test ordered by your physician.

## What affects my cholesterol numbers?

There are many things that can affect your cholesterol numbers. Some of these things include diet, weight and also your family history.

## Cholesterol levels

	Optimal	Above Optimal	Borderline High	High
Total Cholesterol	Below 200		200-239	Above 240
LDL Cholesterol (Bad)	Below 100	100-129	130-159	Above 160
Triglycerides (Lower is better)	Below 150		150-199	Above 200

  

	Optimal	Below Optimal	Low
HDL Cholesterol (Good)	60+	40-59	Below 40



	Exercise regularly	Stops smoking	Reduce fat intake	Reduce sugar intake	Lose weight	Limit alcohol	Increase fiber	Manage stress
To increase HDL	✓	✓			✓			✓
To lower LDL	✓		✓		✓		✓	
To lower triglycerides	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		

## Find a Doctor

If you need to find a primary care provider, visit [OhioHealth.com/FindADoctor](https://www.ohiohealth.com/FindADoctor)

## What can I do to improve my cholesterol?

- + Exercise.
- + Eat a healthy diet by limiting foods with fat and high amounts of cholesterol and eat more fruits and vegetables.
- + Maintain a healthy weight.
- + Don't smoke.

	Type of fat	Food sources	Effects on blood cholesterol
AVOID	<b>Saturated fat</b> (5-6% of total calories, 13g per day on average if you need to lower your cholesterol)	Animal fats – fatty beef, pork, lamb, veal, lard, beef fat, milk fat, bacon fat, butter, cheese, cream cheese, half and half, sour cream, coconut, palm, palm kernel oil	↑ Total cholesterol ↓ LDL cholesterol ↑ HDL cholesterol
	<b>Trans fat</b> (Limit to 2% of total calories or less)	Stick margarine, hydrogenated oils, solid shortening, many cookies and pastries, many fried foods	↑ Total cholesterol ↑ LDL cholesterol ↓ HDL cholesterol
MODERATION	<b>Cholesterol</b>	Egg yolks, liver, organ meats, shellfish (shrimp 40–50 mg/ounce)	↑ Total cholesterol when ingested with saturated fat, or when included in your diet in high amounts (> 200 mg/day)
	<b>Polyunsaturated fat</b> <b>Omega-6 fatty acids</b>	Safflower, corn, soybean and sunflower oils, walnuts, pine nuts, seeds, soft or tub margarines, mayonnaise, salad	↓ Total cholesterol ↓ LDL cholesterol ↑ Potential for inflammation
INCLUDE	<b>Monounsaturated</b>	Olive, canola or peanut oils, olives, natural nut butters, avocados, almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans, hazelnuts	↓ Total cholesterol ↓ LDL cholesterol ↑ HDL cholesterol ↓ Triglycerides
	<b>Omega-3 fatty acids</b>	Salmon, herring, anchovies, sardines, mackerel, fatty fish, flax and chia seeds, nuts	↓ Triglycerides ↓ Clot formation ↓ Inflammation ↓ Vasoconstriction

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