

Do You Know Your Cholesterol Levels?

Healthy Hearts, Healthy Homes



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Read other booklets in the *Healthy Hearts, Healthy Homes* series:

- Are You at Risk for Heart Disease?
- Do You Need To Lose Weight?
- Keep the Beat: Control Your High Blood Pressure
- Protect Your Heart Against Diabetes
- Enjoy Living Smoke Free

Web site:

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/sp_package.htm

For More Information

The NHLBI Information Center is a service of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health. The Information Center provides information to health professionals, patients, and the public about the treatment, diagnosis, and prevention of heart, lung, and blood diseases. Please contact the Information Center for prices and availability of publications.

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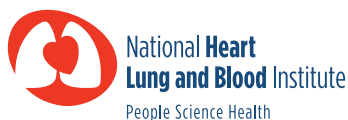
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Honor Your Heart: Get Moving and Eat Smart

Did you know that high blood cholesterol is a serious problem among Latinos?

- About one in five Latinos has high blood cholesterol.
- Only half of those who have high blood cholesterol know it.
- Adult Latinos are less likely than other groups to have their cholesterol checked.



Isabel Gómez will show you how she and her family lowered their cholesterol levels.

Isabel: “My LDL cholesterol level was high, and I needed to bring it down.”



Isabel Learns About Blood Cholesterol

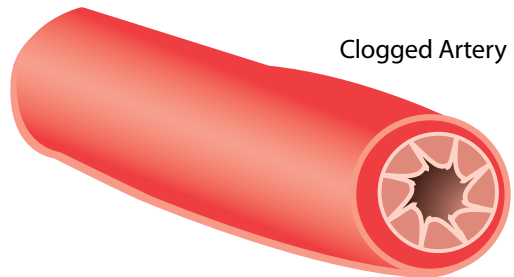
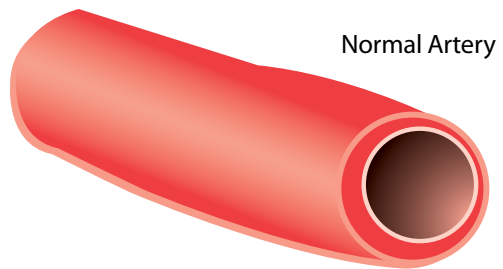
What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body.

Why is high blood cholesterol bad for your heart?

Your body makes all the cholesterol you need to be healthy. When you eat foods high in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol, your body can make too much cholesterol.

Over time, this extra cholesterol can clog your arteries. This increases your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.



What is good and bad cholesterol?

HDL is “good cholesterol.” It helps clean fat and cholesterol from your blood vessels. Just remember the **H** in **HDL** for **Healthy**, and the **H**igher it is, the better.

LDL is “bad cholesterol.” It carries cholesterol to your blood vessels, clogging them like rust in a pipe. Remember the **L** in **LDL** for **Lousy**, and the **L**ower it is, the better.



Isabel: “I was not aware that my LDL was high. I made sure that my husband, Mario, got his cholesterol checked, too.”

Have your blood cholesterol checked.

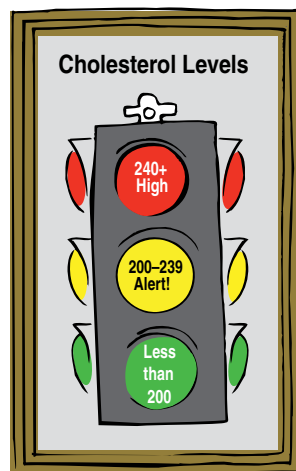
The blood test to measure the cholesterol levels is called a lipid profile. You can have this test done at your doctor’s office. If you are 20 years of age or older, check your cholesterol at least every 5 years. Your doctor may test you more often if your cholesterol levels are high.



Learn what your cholesterol levels mean.

Total Cholesterol:

- Less than 200 mg/dL—Ideal.
Good for you!
- 200 to 239 mg/dL—Borderline.
Be alert!
- 240 mg/dL or more—
High. Danger!



LDL (Bad) Cholesterol:

- Keep it low!
- Less than 100 mg/dL is ideal.

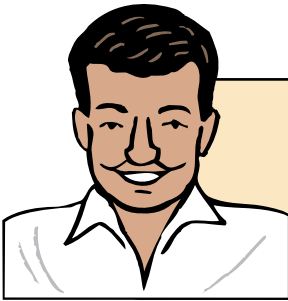
HDL (Good) Cholesterol:

- The higher, the better!
- Keep it 40 mg/dL
or higher.



The Gómez Family Plan To Keep Their Cholesterol Normal

1. Cut back on foods high in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol.



Mario: “Isabel and I have lost weight, and our cholesterol levels are reaching normal levels. We feel good! The kids are eating healthy foods, too.”

Watch out for the “Bad Fat Duo”—saturated fat and *trans* fat.



Saturated fat and *trans* fat are fats that raise blood cholesterol levels the most. Stay away from them. Know where they hide. Read the food label.

Saturated fat is found in foods such as high-fat meat, cheese, milk, and butter.

***Trans* fat** is found in foods such as vegetable shortening, stick margarine, fried foods, and baked products like cookies, crackers, pies, and pastries.

Start eating heart healthy foods by making a few changes at a time.

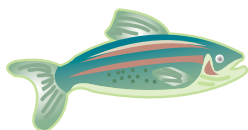
Eat more of these foods:

- Fat-free milk, cheese, and yogurt



- Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains

- Fish*



- Turkey and chicken without skin

- Lean cuts of meat

- Beans and lentils

- Corn (instead of flour) tortillas



Cut back on these foods:

- Whole milk, full-fat cheese, and ice cream

- Fatty cuts of meat and refried beans

- Sausage, hotdogs, and bologna

- Liver, kidney, and other organ meats

- Egg yolks—
Have no more than four a week.

- Butter and stick margarine

- Lard, coconut, palm, or palm kernel oil

*Pregnant and nursing mothers: Talk to your health care provider to find out the types of fish you can eat that are lower in mercury. Mercury can be harmful for your baby.

Read the food label to choose foods lower in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol.

Compare these Nutrition Facts labels for an English muffin and a doughnut.

Which food is the better choice? _____

English Muffin

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 muffin (57g)	
Servings Per Container 6	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 120	Calories from Fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 290mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	8%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 4g	
Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 15% • Iron 8%	

Doughnut

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 doughnut (85g)	
Servings 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 300	Calories from Fat 140
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 16g	24%
Saturated Fat 4g	20%
Trans Fat 5g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 130mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 38g	13%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 22g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 2%	
Calcium 8% • Iron 8%	

Answer: The English muffin is the better choice. The doughnut is higher in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol.

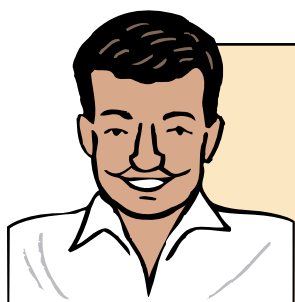
- 2. Do 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days.
- 3. Aim for a healthy weight. Lose weight if you are overweight.



What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are another type of fat found in the blood. When your triglycerides are high, it can raise your risk for heart disease.

A healthy triglyceride level is less than 150 mg/dL.



Mario: “The doctor told me my triglyceride level was 300 mg/dL. This is twice as high as the normal value. That is why I have cut back on sweets and soda. I also drink less alcohol.”

These steps can help you control your triglyceride level:

- Control your weight.
- Be physically active.
- Quit smoking.
- Limit foods and beverages that are high in sugar.
- Limit alcohol.



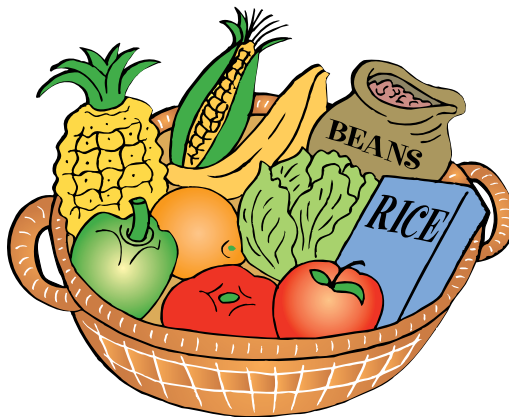


What Is the Metabolic Syndrome?

The metabolic syndrome is a group of factors that increase your chances of developing heart disease or stroke. The metabolic syndrome also increases your risk for diabetes.



Mario: “I have the metabolic syndrome. Five factors make up this syndrome and can cause trouble for your heart. My doctor said that you only need three of the five factors to have the metabolic syndrome. I am working with my doctor to decrease these factors.”

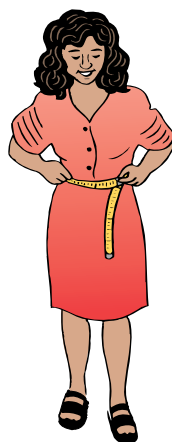


Do you have the metabolic syndrome?

Having three or more of these factors means you have the metabolic syndrome.

Check the factors you have:

- High waist measurement
 - ☐ More than 35 inches for women
 - ☐ More than 40 inches for men
- High triglyceride level of 150 mg/dL or more
- Low HDL (good) cholesterol level
 - ☐ Less than 50 mg/dL for women
 - ☐ Less than 40 mg/dL for men
- Blood pressure of 130/85 or more
- High fasting blood sugar of 100 mg/dL or more



If you have three or more of these factors, talk to your doctor about the metabolic syndrome.

Follow the Gómez family's plan on pages 5–7 if you have the metabolic syndrome.



My Family Plan To Lower Blood Cholesterol Levels

Check the steps you plan to take to lower your blood cholesterol and keep it low. Start with a few changes and add more over time.

- ☐ Get my cholesterol level checked.
- ☐ Talk to my doctor about what my cholesterol numbers mean.
- ☐ Read food labels to choose foods lower in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, and calories.
- ☐ Bake, broil, or grill foods instead of frying.
- ☐ Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- ☐ Drink water or sugar-free beverages instead of regular soda.
- ☐ Maintain a healthy weight. Lose weight if I am overweight.
- ☐ Do 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days.



My Heart Health Card

Use this card to record the results of your tests.
Take action to have normal levels.

♥ = Normal values

Name: _____

Weight	Date				
	Result				
BMI ♥ 18.5 to 24.9	Date				
	Result				
Waist Measurement ♥ Men—40 inches or less ♥ Women—35 inches or less	Date				
	Result				
Blood Pressure ♥ Less than 120/80 mmHg	Date				
	Result				
Tests to measure “fats” in the blood					
Total Cholesterol ♥ Less than 200 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
LDL ♥ Less than 100 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
HDL ♥ 40 mg/dL or more	Date				
	Result				
Triglycerides ♥ Less than 150 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
Tests to check sugar in the blood for diabetes					
Blood Glucose ♥ Fasting—less than 100 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
A1C ♥ Less than 7%	Date				
	Result				
Other	Date				
	Result				



Play It Smart. Take Care of Your Heart

Diabetes, overweight, high blood pressure, rich meals, desserts, high waist measure, a lack of physical activity, and poor nutrition will bring bad news from your physician.

Take action now to prevent disease,
reduce the fat, STOP SMOKING, PLEASE!
Keep lots of fruits and veggies on your table
and when you shop, read the food label.

Turn off the TV and go for a walk.
Go with a friend and enjoy a good talk.
Plan for the future and increase your chances
of attending your kids' graduations and dances.

Change your lifestyle now—Play it smart!
Start living healthy, and guard your heart!

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