



Lower your risk for heart disease by controlling your cholesterol

Your body needs cholesterol to function normally. However, your body already makes all that you need. Excess cholesterol can build up in your arteries which can cause them to narrow, putting you at risk for heart disease. Simple dietary and lifestyle changes can often help lower your cholesterol. **Take the following steps to control your cholesterol and protect your heart.**

Know Your Numbers

Starting at age 20 you should have a blood test every 5 years to test for HDL, LDL, and total cholesterol. If you have been diagnosed with heart disease or are already at greater risk, your doctor may recommend more frequent testing.

Aim for your levels to be within the ranges below

HDL “good” cholesterol	LDL “bad” cholesterol	Total cholesterol	Triglyceride
men: 40 mg/dL or higher	Less than 100 mg/dL	125 to 200 mg/dL	Less than 150 mg/dL
women: 50 mg/dL or higher			

Make Over Your Menu

- **Aim to eat 5 servings** of fruits and vegetables each day.
- **Make half your grains** whole by choosing foods like oats, quinoa, wild rice, brown rice, barley and bulgur.
- **Focus on lean sources of protein**, including skinless poultry and fish.
- **Try other sources of protein** such as beans and legumes.
- **Select fat-free** or low-fat dairy products.
- **Choose healthy fats** such as those found in nuts, seeds, avocados, olive oil and canola oil.

Commit to Lifestyle Changes

- **Exercise for at least 150 minutes per week** to raise your good HDL cholesterol.
- **Shrink your waistline.** Abdominal fat is linked to high cholesterol. Men should keep their waist under 40 inches, while women should not exceed 35 inches.
- **Lose weight.** If you’re overweight, you may experience higher levels of cholesterol.
- **Avoid using tobacco.** Tobacco use lowers HDL and can lead to high cholesterol.



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