



# HIGH CHOLESTEROL

The body needs cholesterol to build cells and make vitamins and other hormones.<sup>1</sup> Cholesterol circulates in the blood but can join with fats and other substances and build up in the inner walls of arteries, which can become clogged, reduce blood flow and increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.<sup>1</sup> High cholesterol is one of the major controllable risk factors for coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

## DESIRABLE CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

A lipid panel measures total cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglycerides. Triglycerides are a specific type of fat in the blood and a high level is a sign of an increased risk of Type 2 Diabetes.<sup>2</sup> A diagnosis of high cholesterol will show if the total or LDL levels are higher than HDL levels.

Total cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL (bad) cholesterol	Less than 100 mg/dL
HDL (good) cholesterol	Greater than or equal to 60 mg/dL
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL

Source: [National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute](#)

## UNHEALTHY HABITS CAN CAUSE HIGH CHOLESTEROL

You are likely to develop high cholesterol if you do not control the following:

- Unhealthy eating pattern
- Physical inactivity
- Cigarette and secondhand smoking
- Alcohol consumption
- Obesity

Sources:

1. [American Heart Association, What is Cholesterol?](#)
2. [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, What is Cholesterol?](#)
3. [American Heart Association, Fish and Omega-3 Fatty Acids](#)
4. [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Choose Healthy Fats](#)
5. [American Heart Association, The Skinny on Fats](#)

## PREVENT OR CONTROL HIGH CHOLESTEROL BY FOLLOWING A HEALTHY EATING PATTERN

Cholesterol comes from two sources, your liver and the foods you eat. Like the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) pattern, which limits red meat, salt and sweets, a plant-based eating pattern reduces high cholesterol through increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts. Other tips include:

### Increase fiber:

Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are good sources of fiber, which can help improve blood cholesterol. Soluble fibers such as whole wheat bread, brown rice and oats can help lower LDL cholesterol.<sup>2</sup>



### Increase omega-3 essential fatty acids:

Seafood high in omega-3 fatty acids can help reduce triglyceride levels. The recommended amount is two 3 oz. servings per week.<sup>3</sup> This includes salmon, tuna and sardines.<sup>4</sup>



### Decrease saturated and trans fat:

Cholesterol naturally comes from the liver and the other sources come from foods from animals. This includes red meat, dairy products and butter. Choose healthy alternatives such as tofu, almond milk, olive oil, etc. Increase intake of unsaturated fats, which help manage high levels of LDL, while increasing HDL levels. This includes olive oil and nuts.<sup>5</sup>

