

# What is Cholesterol?

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Cholesterol is a fat-like substance circulating in your blood. Your body needs a small amount to function properly and to support cell function and make certain hormones. Some of your cholesterol comes from the food you eat, but the liver makes all the cholesterol you need.

There are 2 types of cholesterol:

- **High-Density Lipoprotein** (HDL or “good cholesterol”)

The higher the better! They attach to bad cholesterol and bring it to the liver where it can be filtered out of the body.

- **Low-Density Lipoprotein** (LDL or “bad cholesterol”)

Causes plaque buildup that can clog your arteries, increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke.

## What do my cholesterol levels mean?

High blood cholesterol signals a higher risk of heart attack and stroke. That’s why it’s important to have your cholesterol levels checked regularly and discuss them with your doctor. A lipoprotein profile test gives information about total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and tryglycerides (blood fats).

## Warning signs of a heart attack:

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort with one or more of these symptoms:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Other signs including breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

## Warning signs of a stroke:

*Learn to recognize the signs. Time lost is brain lost.*

- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

**Call 9-1-1... get to a hospital immediately if you experience signs of a heart attack or stroke.**

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## Cholesterol Facts

1 out of 5 people have high cholesterol

50% of Americans have levels above the suggested limit

60% of all heart attacks can be linked to high cholesterol

Almost 20% of all strokes can be linked to high cholesterol

## What should my cholesterol and triglyceride levels be?

### HDL Cholesterol Levels:

HDL cholesterol is good cholesterol because it lowers your risk of heart attack and stroke. That means that the higher your HDL, the better.

Less than 40 mg/dL = Low HDL (higher risk)

40 to 59 mg/dL = The higher, the better

60 mg/dL and above = High HDL (lower risk)

### LDL Cholesterol Levels:

LDL is the main carrier for harmful cholesterol in your blood. A high level of LDL cholesterol means there's a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.

Less than 100 mg/dL = Optimal for people with heart disease or diabetes

100 to 129 mg/dL = Near or above optimal

130 to 159 mg/dL = Borderline high

160 to 189 mg/dL = High

190 mg/dL and above = Very high

### Triglycerides Levels:

Triglycerides are the most common type of fat in your body. Many people who have heart disease or diabetes have high fasting triglyceride levels. Studies have shown that people with above-normal fasting triglyceride levels have a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.

Less than 150 mg/dL = Normal

150 to 199 mg/dL = Borderline high

200 to 499 mg/dL = High

500 mg/dL and above = Very high



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