



Keep your cholesterol in check

High blood cholesterol can significantly increase your risk of high blood pressure and diabetes, both stroke factors. Although cholesterol affects all cultural groups in the same way, researchers estimate that up to 40 percent of African Americans have never had their levels checked. There may be no symptoms or warning signs of high blood cholesterol, which raises the importance of having your physician check for it regularly.

A few things you should know to maintain healthy cholesterol levels

- ▶ The liver manufactures most of the cholesterol that is found in your bloodstream. However, additional cholesterol is introduced into the bloodstream by eating foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol. This includes animal products like eggs, red meat and high-fat dairy products.
- ▶ Anyone can develop high cholesterol regardless of age, gender or race.
- ▶ High levels of cholesterol in the blood (200 – 240 mg/dL for adults) may lead to narrowing of the arteries and has been associated with the development of cardiovascular diseases. These diseases can lead to heart attacks and strokes, which are credited as the leading cause of death in America – more than all other diseases combined.

Are You at Risk for High Cholesterol?

1.	Does your brother, sister, mother or father have high cholesterol levels?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Do you regularly eat foods that contain saturated fats, such as animal products, cocoa butter, coconut oil or palm oil?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Do you regularly eat hydrogenated fats found in vegetable oil, margarine and processed foods?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Do you regularly eat foods high in cholesterol and fat, such as eggs, whole milk dairy products and meats?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Are you overweight by 20 pounds or more?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Do you avoid foods high in fiber, such as carrots, oat bran, beans, fruits and vegetables?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Are you unaware of your blood cholesterol level?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you score:

- 5 or more YES answers =** Speak with your physician about your cholesterol level and lifestyle habits.
- 3–4 YES answers =** Speak with your physician about how to concentrate on changing those “yes” answers to “no” answers.
- 2 or fewer YES answers =** Congratulations for paying close attention to your health.

Good cholesterol vs. bad cholesterol

Cholesterol doesn't dissolve in the bloodstream. Instead, it is carried through the body by two types of transporters called lipoproteins.

LDL (low density lipoprotein) = "bad" cholesterol

LDL (bad) cholesterol tends to form fatty deposits that cling to the walls of the arteries that supply blood to the heart and brain. The resulting clogging can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

HDL (high density lipoprotein) = "good" cholesterol

HDL (good) cholesterol removes excess cholesterol from the bloodstream, thus reducing the risk for coronary heart disease and stroke.

Recommended Healthy Levels Ages 2-18			
	Desirable	Borderline	High Risk
Cholesterol	Less than 170	171-199	200 or more
LDL Cholesterol	Less than 110	111-129	130 or more
HDL Cholesterol	More than 60	36-59	35 or less

Screening recommendations: Consult your physician for specific screening guidelines.

Recommended Healthy Levels Ages 19 and Older				
	Desirable	Acceptable	Borderline	High Risk
Total Cholesterol				
Men's range	Less than 180	180-199	200-239	240 or more
Women's range	Less than 180	180-199	200-239	240 or more
HDL Cholesterol				
Men's range	50 or more	45-49	35-44	34 or less
Women's range	60 or more	55-59	40-54	39 or less
Total Cholesterol/HDL Ratio				
Men's range	4.0 or less	4.1-5.0	5.1-6.5	6.6 or more
Women's range	3.3 or less	3.4-4.5	4.6-6.5	6.6 or more
LDL Cholesterol				
Men's range	100 or less	100-129	130-159	160 or more
Women's range	100 or less	100-129	130-159	160 or more

Screening Recommendations		
Blood Cholesterol Levels	199 mg or less	200 mg or more
Screening Frequency	Consult your physician for specific screening guidelines.	A complete cholesterol panel is recommended. See your physician.

Sources: National Cholesterol Education Program guidelines, 2010.

American Heart Association 2011. http://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@sop/@smd/documents/downloadable/ucm_319586.pdf



Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in the bloodstream that is an essential part of our cell structure.

Among African American adults, about 37 percent of men and 41.2 percent of women have total cholesterol levels of 200 mg/dL or higher, which is considered borderline to high risk.

Source: American Heart Association, 2011



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