What You Need To Know About Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a type of fat found in your body. Having high cholesterol may put you at risk for heart disease. People of all ages and backgrounds can have high cholesterol.

There are two kinds of cholesterol: LDL and HDL.

LDL is called BAD cholesterol. It can build up in your blood vessels and make it hard for blood to flow. HDL is called GOOD cholesterol. It helps get rid of cholesterol from your blood vessels.

Aim for these cholesterol levels:
- LDL – below 100 mg/dL
- HDL – above 40 mg/dL for men, above 50 mg/dL for women

Triglycerides are another type of fat found in your body. High levels of triglycerides are also unhealthy. Aim for a number below 150 mg/dL.

You are more likely to have high cholesterol that can lead to heart disease if you have any of these risk factors:
- Smoking
- Being too fat
- Poor diet
- Lack of exercise
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Family history of heart disease

To help prevent high cholesterol, you can:
- Lose extra pounds and maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a low-fat, low-salt diet
- Eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Exercise on most days of the week for at least 30 minutes
- Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all
- Quit smoking

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