

08 Know Your Numbers Month

HEALTHY TIP SHEET - AUGUST



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What's High Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of fat called a lipid. Your body needs some cholesterol. But if you have too much, it starts to build up in your arteries. To understand what happens, think about how a clog forms in a pipe under a kitchen sink. Like the buildup of grease in the pipe, the buildup of cholesterol narrows your arteries and makes it harder for blood to flow through them. This can lead to serious problems, including heart attack and stroke.

To find out how you're doing, compare your cholesterol number to the following:

- **The best number** is less than 200.
- **A borderline-high number** is 200 to 239.
- **A high number** is 240 or above.

What are the different kinds of cholesterol?

- **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL)** are the "bad" cholesterol. LDL should be less than 100. LDL increases your risk of heart problems, so the lower, the better.
- **High-density lipoproteins (HDL)** are the "good" cholesterol. They help clear the bad cholesterol (LDL) from your blood. A high level of HDL can protect you from heart attack. HDL should be more than 40. The higher your HDL, the better.

How is it treated?

The two main treatments are lifestyle changes and medicines.

- **Lose weight**, if you need to. Losing just five to 10 pounds can lower cholesterol levels.
- **Be more active.** Exercise can raise your "good" HDL and may help control your weight.
- **Quit smoking**, if you smoke. Quitting can help raise your HDL and improve your heart health.

Some lifestyle changes are enough on their own. But if you try them for a few months and they don't lower your levels enough, your doctor may prescribe a cholesterol-lowering medication.

Source: WebMD.com, Cholesterol Management Health Center (July, 2010)

The information contained in this flyer has been carefully reviewed for accuracy. It is not intended to replace the advice of your physician or health care provider.

