

# Managing Your Cholesterol



## What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that the body uses to make hormones and other substances.

High blood cholesterol can lead to heart disease. Two blood cholesterol measurements are:

- **LDL** (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is the “bad” cholesterol because it leads to a buildup of cholesterol in the arteries.
- **HDL** (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is the “good” cholesterol because it helps remove cholesterol from the body. An HDL of 60 mg/dL or higher will help lower your risk for heart disease.

## What affects cholesterol levels?

- **Diet** - Foods high in solid fat, like cheese, butter, pizza, and many fast foods, can make your cholesterol go up.
- **Weight** - Being overweight is a risk factor for heart disease and can increase your cholesterol.
- **Physical Activity** - Regular activity can lower your total cholesterol and can help you lose weight.

- **Age and Gender** - As men and women get older, their cholesterol levels rise.
- **Heredity** - Your genes partly determine how much cholesterol your body makes. High cholesterol can run in families.

## How Can I Manage My Cholesterol? Healthy Eating

- Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products, lean meats, skinless poultry, and eight ounces of seafood weekly.
- Read food labels to avoid trans fat found in processed foods like baked goods. Look for soft and liquid margarines.
- Increase fiber in your diet from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Soluble fiber found in oats, dried peas, and beans can help lower your cholesterol.
- Learn more about healthy eating from the “Eating for Life” program.



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## Physical Activity

Increase your physical activity to a total of 30 minutes a day most days of the week, in no less than 10-minute periods. Exercise can help you lose weight and lower your LDL level while raising your HDL level.

## Take Care of Yourself

- Avoid tobacco products.
- Take medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- Get regular checkups with your physician.



## Staying Healthy Programs

### Eating for Life

Develop healthy eating and exercise habits

### Stay Smokeless for Life

Quit tobacco to improve your health

### Guided Meditation

Experience a retreat from everyday stressors

### Healthy Habits Healthy You

Develop habits to prevent diabetes and heart disease

### Tai Chi

Learn to mentally and physically relax

### MoveAbout

Learn about staying physically active every day

### Yoga

Stretching and strengthening exercises

### Sleep Better

Learn about the importance of sleep

### Stress Less

Learn to prevent and manage stress in your daily life

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