

Heart Disease: How to Manage Your Cholesterol



Cholesterol is a type of fat your body makes. You also get it from the foods you eat. Your body uses cholesterol for many things, such as making new cells.

Having too much cholesterol can clog your blood vessels and lead to health problems, such as a heart attack or stroke.

Managing your cholesterol is a key to good health. It is especially important when you have heart problems, such as coronary artery disease (CAD). You can lower your risk for heart attack and stroke by lowering your cholesterol.

Cholesterol tests

A big part of managing your cholesterol is knowing what your levels are. You will not feel any symptoms when your cholesterol is too high. So you will need to get your levels checked.

Your doctor can check your cholesterol with a simple blood test. These tests help you and your doctor to:

- Choose the best treatment.

- See how close you are to your cholesterol goals.

If you take cholesterol medicines, tests help your doctor know if your dose or your medicines need to be changed. Ask your doctor how often you should have your cholesterol tested.

Your cholesterol goals

Cholesterol tests show your levels of different kinds of cholesterol.

LDL is often called the "bad" kind of cholesterol. **HDL** is often called the "good" kind.

- Think of **HDL** as **healthy**. Keep it **high**.
- Think of **LDL** as **lousy**. Keep it **low**.

Talk to your doctor about your cholesterol goals.

Managing your cholesterol

Lifestyle changes

Making healthy lifestyle changes can help you manage your cholesterol. Focus on these three tips:

- Eat a healthy, cholesterol-lowering diet.
- Get active.
- Lose weight if you need to.

Medicines

To reach your goals, you may need to take medicines along with making healthy lifestyle changes. Statins are medicines that help you lower your cholesterol. They may lower your risk for heart attack or stroke.

If your LDL goal is less than 100, your doctor will most likely have you take statins to help you reach this goal.

If you are taking medicine for high cholesterol, make sure to take it every day or as your doctor says.

