

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a white, waxy, odorless substance that helps your body use fats, insulates your nerve and brain tissues, waterproofs your skin and helps make hormones. But too much of a good thing can lead to problems. Too much cholesterol in your blood can clog your blood vessels, leading to heart disease, chest pain or even stroke.

What Cholesterol Does:

Your liver makes all the cholesterol your body needs to carry digested fat through your blood vessels. Your liver does this by forming two cholesterol-fat "packages":

LDL (low-density lipoprotein) is often called "bad" cholesterol. When you have too much LDL, it can easily stick to blood vessel walls.

HDL (high-density lipoprotein) is considered to be "good" cholesterol. It clears your blood vessels of stuck cholesterol, helping to keep your vessels unclogged.

You are considered to have high cholesterol if you have a cholesterol reading of 240 or higher, which also increases the risk for heart attack or stroke.

Controlling Cholesterol:

Eat Better - Lower the amount of fat and cholesterol and increase the amount of fiber and starches you eat.

Exercise - Exercise seems to increase HDL ("good") cholesterol.

Watch Your Weight - If you are overweight, your body is storing too much fat and cholesterol.

Other Methods - Your Physician may prescribe medications if the above regimen does not work.

Remember! To help lower your risk for heart disease and stroke, it's wise to stop smoking, control high blood pressure and learn to manage stress.

ATTENTION: This web page is intended to be used for health information ONLY. If you or a family member has a medical emergency, please call your doctor or 911, or your local emergency service number.