

# *CHOLESTEROL*

The good, the  
bad, the ugly  
truths

## The good

What is cholesterol?

-A waxy, fat-like substance found in the walls of cells in all parts of the body. Used to make hormones, bile acids, vitamin D, and other substances.

*The body makes all the cholesterol it needs!*

HDL (good) cholesterol protects against heart disease.

Desired lab value: 60 or more

## The bad

Bad cholesterol (LDL) is the main source of cholesterol buildup and blockage in arteries. The higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk for developing heart disease or having a heart attack. Heart disease is the number one killer of women and men in the United States. Each year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about a half million people die from heart disease.

## The Ugly

Talk with your health provider about monitoring your cholesterol numbers. There are four values to monitor:

1. Total cholesterol
2. LDL (bad) cholesterol (Aim for less than 200\*)
3. HDL (good) cholesterol (Aim for more than 60\*)
4. Triglycerides (another form of fat in your blood) (Aim for less than 150\*)  
[always consult with your provider]

## What you can do

**Diet:** reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet (fatty meats, processed foods, hydrogenated oils).

**Weight:** Just dropping 10 pounds can help. Excess weight tends to increase your LDL level.

**Physical activity:** Regular physical activity can help lower LDL (bad) and raise HDL (good) cholesterol. Aim for 30 minutes most days.

## Treat your high cholesterol

Therapeutic life style changes:

cholesterol-lowering diet, physical activity, weight management. Also, address other factors such as high blood pressure and smoking.

Drug treatment: may be prescribed to help lower your LDL.

*You can reduce your cholesterol and reduce your risk for heart disease!*

