

Lowering Your Cholesterol

Why is it important to keep your cholesterol level under 200? Do you know your number?

What is cholesterol?^{1, 2}

Cholesterol is a type of fat that's in your body and blood. Your body makes some cholesterol and you get more from the food you eat. You need some cholesterol to be healthy, but too much is not healthy.

If you have too much cholesterol in your blood, it can clog your arteries. Blood can't get through to your heart, and you could have a heart attack or stroke.

Your doctor can ask for a blood test to measure your cholesterol. If your cholesterol level is more than 200, your doctor may suggest ways to lower the level.

What's for dinner?³

The first step to lower your cholesterol is to eat a healthy, low-fat diet. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. Watch portion sizes as well. You also may be able to lower your cholesterol by eating less fat.

Get moving!⁴

Here are other steps you can take to lower your cholesterol:

Be more active. Get some exercise.

Start with a brisk 10-minute walk, three times a day, five days a week. Work up to five hours each week for even more health benefits.

Lose weight if you need to.

Control your weight, exercise and eat foods low in fat.

Talk to your doctor.

You may need prescribed drugs to help lower your cholesterol if these methods don't work.



Trim down on fatty foods.⁵

Try to eat less of these foods:

- Fried food
- Gravy
- Chicken, pork and fish skin
- Salad dressing
- Cheese
- Creamy sauces
- Ice cream

Do your heart a favor.⁶

Pick up good habits to help control your cholesterol. Be sure to get your cholesterol checked once every five years.

For more facts, talk to your doctor or nurse. Or, call the American Heart Association at **1-800-AHA-USA1; (1-800-242-8721)**. Visit online at www.americanheart.org.

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Sources: ¹National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), *What Is Cholesterol?* (Accessed August 2009): www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbc/HBC_WhatIs.html

²National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, *How Is High Blood Cholesterol Diagnosed?* (Accessed August 2009): http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbc/HBC_Diagnosis.html

^{3,4,5,6}Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *High Blood Cholesterol Prevention* (Accessed August 2009): www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/prevention.htm

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