



# Things to Know About Cholesterol

**Cholesterol is a type of fat. Your liver makes all the cholesterol you need, but some foods also have cholesterol.**

When too much cholesterol builds up in your blood vessels, you are at risk for problems with your heart and blood vessels. These types of problems are called cardiovascular disease, or CVD.

If managing your diet and exercising does not control your cholesterol, you may need to take medicine. Talk with your healthcare provider about measuring and treating your cholesterol.



## Get a Cholesterol Test

You need a blood test to know your cholesterol levels. This test may be called a cholesterol test, a lipid panel, or a lipid profile. You have to stop eating or drinking liquids other than water before most cholesterol tests. Follow your doctor's instructions carefully so that you get the correct test results.

Your cholesterol test will measure 4 types of lipids (fats) in your blood:

- **Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL) is “bad” cholesterol.** LDL can buildup and block your arteries (blood vessels).
- **High Density Lipoproteins (HDL) is “good” cholesterol.** HDL takes the bad cholesterol away from your arteries.
- When you eat, your body changes the calories it does not need into **triglycerides**. These are stored in your fat cells and can increase your risk of CVD.
- Your **total cholesterol** is the total amount of cholesterol in your blood. It includes your LDL, your HDL, and your triglyceride levels.

## Tips for Managing Your Cholesterol

**Be active!** Doing physical activity helps you make more good cholesterol to remove the bad cholesterol out of your arteries. Doing 30 minutes of exercise (brisk walking, swimming, bicycling, or dancing) 5 times a week can help lower your cholesterol.

**Eat healthy foods.** Eat foods that are low in saturated fat and trans fats.

**If you smoke, quit.** Smoking lowers your good cholesterol. It also has other bad effects on your heart and blood vessels. For help, call the NY Quitline at 866-697-8487.

**If you're overweight, lose weight.** Being overweight makes your bad cholesterol levels higher and your good cholesterol levels lower. Losing even a little weight can help improve your cholesterol.

## Here are some foods you should eat to help manage your cholesterol:



A variety of colorful fruits and vegetables.



Foods high in fiber, like beans, whole grain bread, cereals, pasta, and brown rice.



Fat-free dairy products like 1% milk.



Lean meats and poultry (chicken, turkey, duck) without skin. No more than 5 ounces a day, or about the size of a deck of cards.



Fatty fish like salmon, tuna, and mackerel (baked or grilled) twice a week.



Nuts and seeds in small amounts (4 to 5 servings a week). 1 serving is about the size of a golf ball.



Unsaturated vegetable oils like olive and canola oils 2 tablespoons a day, or about the size of a ping pong ball.

## Here are some foods you should not eat:



Whole milk, cream, and ice cream



Saturated oils, like coconut oil, and palm oil



Butter, egg yolks, and cheese



Solid fats, like shortening, margarine, and lard



Fatty meats, like pork and beef



Fried and "fast" food



Processed meats, like bacon, sausage, salami, and hot dogs

## For More Information

Point your smartphone camera at this QR code, and tap the link to learn more.



**English:**

Cholesterol

<http://tiny.cc/wsymuz>

**Español:**

Colesterol

<http://tiny.cc/usymuz>



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center

**Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service**

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