



HIGH CHOLESTEROL: WHAT PATIENTS AND FAMILIES SHOULD KNOW

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

- Cholesterol is one of two major fats found in your blood. The other fat is called Triglyceride. Fats are an important part of your diet and serve many purposes.
- The majority of our Cholesterol is produced in the liver. We also take in Cholesterol through the food we eat. Foods containing Cholesterol come from animal fat, such as meat, milk, eggs, butter, and cheese.
- Fats are used as “fuel” or energy for the body. Fats are also an important part for your cells and the body stores fats for future use. Fats also insulate the body from the cold.
- There is good and bad cholesterol. The good cholesterol is called High Density Lipoprotein Cholesterol or HDL-C. The bad cholesterol is called Low Density Lipoprotein Cholesterol or LDL-C. LDL contributes to atherosclerosis, or deposits of plaque on artery walls.
- There is an association between high Cholesterol and Triglycerides and cardiovascular disease, such as cardiac disease and stroke.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHOLESTEROL IS TOO HIGH?

You probably will not know if your cholesterol is too high. It is important to have a routine physical examination and blood tests done to check for high cholesterol at least every five years, more often if recommended by your health care provider. Generally you are at greater risk for high cholesterol if you are overweight, inactive, smoke, and eat foods that contain high amount of animal fat.

WHAT IS A NORMAL CHOLESTEROL LEVEL?

Below are the average cholesterol levels. However, always talk with your Health Care Provider to check what is normal for you!

LDL-C or “bad” cholesterol:

Below 100 mg/dL is considered normal

HDL-C or “good” cholesterol: carries cholesterol away from the arteries, back to the liver to be filtered out of the body

Greater than 40 mg/dL in men, greater than 50mg/dL in women is considered normal or heart-protective

Triglycerides: A type of fat the body makes

Less than 150mg/dL is a desirable level

Total Cholesterol:

Less than 200 mg/dL is a desirable level

WHAT IF MY CHOLESTEROL LEVEL IS TOO HIGH?

There are several ways to reduce your cholesterol. The good news is it is all in your hands! Lifestyle changes are recommended such as changing your dietary intake, stop smoking, regular exercising, and you may need to take medicine to normalize your cholesterol level. But remember, you don't have to make all changes at the same time. The best way to approach lifestyle changes is one step at the time!

EAT WELL AND LOSE WEIGHT!

- Decrease intake of saturated fat such as animal fats: butter, bacon, poultry skin, dairy fats, and eggs.
- Choose lean meats, skim milk, and reduced fat dairy products.
- Avoid Trans Fatty Acids such as snack foods (cookies, crackers, or snack cakes)
- Increase the intake of soluble fiber such as dry beans, oatmeal, fruits, and vegetables.
- Use products containing plant sterols or stanols such as Benecol and Take Control margarines.
- Incorporate regular exercise (30 minutes of aerobic exercise 5 times a week)
- Stop smoking.
- Sometimes you may have to start medicine to lower your cholesterol. You should discuss this with your Health Care Provider.

REMEMBER THIS FORMULA!

Lose Weight + Eat Well + Lower Cholesterol + Exercise + Stop Smoking =

A Healthy Heart and Brain!