



To Your HEALTH



WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

what do your

CHOLESTEROL NUMBERS MEAN?

Everyone age 20 and older should have their cholesterol measured at least once every five years. It is best to have a blood test called a “lipoprotein profile” to find out your cholesterol numbers. This blood test is done after a 9 to 12-hour fast and gives information about your:

- **Total cholesterol**
- **LDL (bad) cholesterol** – the main source of cholesterol buildup and blockage in the arteries
- **HDL (good) cholesterol** – helps keep cholesterol from building up in the arteries
- **Triglycerides** – another form of fat in your blood

If it is not possible to get a lipoprotein profile done, knowing your total cholesterol and HDL cholesterol can give you a general idea about your cholesterol levels. If your total cholesterol is 200 mg/dL* or more or if your HDL is less than 40 mg/dL, you will need to have a lipoprotein profile done.

See how your cholesterol numbers compare to the tables below.

Total Cholesterol Level	Category
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200-239 mg/dL	Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above	High
LDL Cholesterol Level	LDL Cholesterol Category
Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
100-129 mg/dL	Near optimal/above optimal
130-159 mg/dL	Borderline high
160-189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL and above	Very high
HDL Cholesterol Level	HDL Cholesterol Category
See ABC's of HDL column	See ABC's of HDL column

*Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.

Source: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chohl/wyntk.pdf>

ABC's of HDL

HDL (good) cholesterol protects against heart disease, so for HDL, higher numbers are better. A level less than 40 mg/dL is low and is considered a major risk factor because it increases your risk for developing heart disease. HDL levels of 60 mg/dL or more help to lower your risk for heart disease.

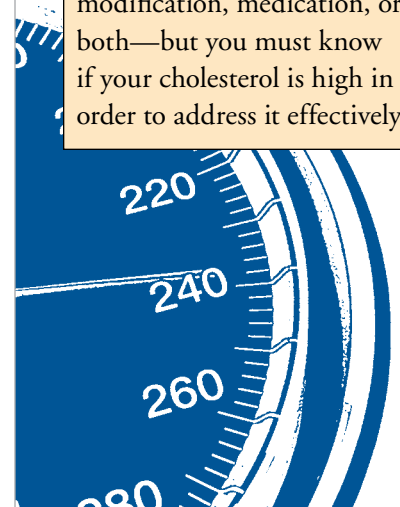
Triglycerides can also raise heart disease risk. Levels that are borderline high (150-199 mg/dL) or high (200 mg/dL or more) may need treatment in some people.

Source: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chohl/wyntk.pdf>

GET SCREENED

Make a point of getting screened for high cholesterol regularly. If you're over the age of 20, you need to have your cholesterol checked every five years.

High cholesterol can be managed—either with lifestyle modification, medication, or both—but you must know if your cholesterol is high in order to address it effectively.



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When To Seek Care

Most abdominal pain is more of an annoyance than a serious medical condition. However, there are times when your condition may indicate the presence of a more serious health problem. Seek medical attention if you're experiencing any of the following symptoms.

Diarrhea

- If you have diarrhea that lasts longer than one week
- If you become dehydrated—symptoms include little or no urination, weakness or dizziness, and an excessively dry mouth
- If stools are bloody
- If you have a fever of 101.5°F or higher with diarrhea

Constipation

- If stools are thin and pencil-like (can indicate the presence of a tumor in the lower bowel)
- If your constipation lasts longer than three weeks
- If stools are bloody
- If you are reliant on laxatives for bowel movements

Gas

- If your gas is accompanied by crushing or squeezing chest pain (possible sign of a heart attack)
- If gas is associated with pain that spreads to the upper abdomen, back, jaw, or arms (possible sign of a heart attack)
- If your gas is accompanied by severe, steady pain in the upper abdomen

STOMACH STANDARDS

How To Manage Abdominal Pain

Most abdominal pain is not serious, although it can be extremely uncomfortable. Diarrhea, constipation, and excessive gas are common causes of abdominal pain. Fortunately, these conditions can be treated at home using simple self-care techniques. Treatment depends on which of these conditions you are experiencing.

Signs & Symptoms

Oftentimes, the symptoms of diarrhea, constipation, and gas can be similar, and may even be experienced together. Take a closer look at the symptoms outlined here to determine which condition you may be experiencing.

Home Treatment

Diarrhea

- More than 3 or 4 loose, watery stools per day
- Cramping and pain in the abdomen
- Bloating

Constipation

- Difficulty passing stools
- Firm, hard bowel movements
- Cramping or pain in the abdomen

Gas

- Rumbling in the stomach
- Excessive flatulence (more than 20 per day)
- Inability to pass gas
- Bloating

Home treatment for most abdominal pain is relatively straightforward, and most often involves taking an over-the-counter medication to relieve symptoms.

Diarrhea

- Drink eight, 8 oz. glasses of water or other clear fluids such as clear soda, juices, or tea each day.
- As your diarrhea clears, add semi-solid and low-fiber foods to your diet.
- Avoid dairy products, fatty, or seasoned foods.
- Stay away from caffeine and nicotine.
- Try an over-the-counter medication such as Pepto-Bismol or Imodium.

Constipation

- Eat on a regular schedule if possible, and consume more high-fiber foods such as fruits and vegetables.
- Drink eight, 8 oz. glasses of water or other clear fluids such as clear soda, juices, or tea each day.
- Increase your level of physical activity.
- If necessary, try a laxative such as Metamucil or Milk of Magnesia. (Follow label directions as excessive use of laxatives can be harmful and may worsen your constipation).

Gas

- Avoid eating spicy or fatty foods.
- Eat slowly, and avoid excessive air intake.
- Cut down on carbonated drinks and beer.
- Avoid lying down immediately after eating.
- Increase your level of physical activity.
- Try an over-the-counter medication such as Gas-X to relieve symptoms.

