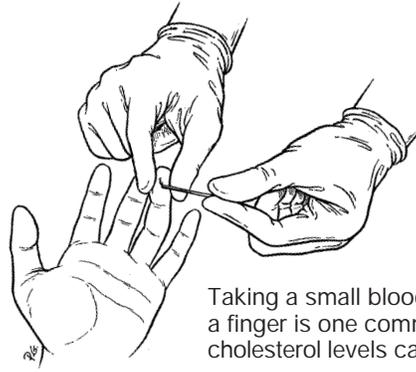


# What Do My Cholesterol Levels Mean?

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High blood cholesterol signals a higher risk of heart attack and stroke. That's why it's important to have your cholesterol levels checked regularly and discuss them with your doctor. A "lipoprotein profile" is a test to find out your blood cholesterol numbers. It gives information about total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol and HDL (good) cholesterol, as well as triglycerides (blood fats).



Taking a small blood sample from a finger is one common way that cholesterol levels can be measured.

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## What should my total cholesterol level be?

### Total Blood Cholesterol Levels:

Less than 200 mg/dL = Desirable (lower risk)  
200 to 239 mg/dL = Borderline high (higher risk)

240 mg/dL and above = High blood cholesterol (more than twice the risk as desirable level)

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## What should my HDL and LDL cholesterol levels be?

HDL stands for high-density lipoprotein. HDL is "good" cholesterol because it seems to lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. That means that — unlike other cholesterol levels — the higher your HDL, the better.

You can raise your HDL by quitting smoking, losing excess weight and being more active.

### HDL Cholesterol Levels:

Less than 40 mg/dL = Low HDL (higher risk)  
40 to 59 mg/dL = The higher, the better  
60 mg/dL and above = High HDL (lower risk)

LDL stands for low-density lipoprotein. This is the main carrier of harmful cholesterol in your blood. A high level of LDL cholesterol means there's a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.

### LDL Cholesterol Levels:

Less than 100 mg/dL = Optimal for people with heart disease or diabetes  
100 to 129 mg/dL = Near or above optimal  
130 to 159 mg/dL = Borderline high  
160 to 189 mg/dL = High  
190 mg/dL and above = Very High

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## What should my triglyceride level be?

Triglycerides are the most common type of fat in your body. They're also a major energy source. They come from food, and your body also makes them. As people get older, gain excess weight or both, their triglyceride and cholesterol levels tend to rise.

Many people who have heart disease or diabetes have high fasting triglyceride levels. Some studies have shown that people with

above-normal fasting triglyceride levels (150 mg/dL or higher) have a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.

### Triglyceride Levels:

Less than 150 mg/dL = Normal  
150 to 199 mg/dL = Borderline High  
200-499 mg/dL = High  
500 mg/dL and above = Very High

## My Cholesterol and Triglyceride Levels

Use the chart below to keep track of your cholesterol and triglyceride levels each time you have a test. Make sure you discuss these numbers with your doctor.

	My Goal	1st Visit	2nd Visit	3rd Visit
Total blood cholesterol level	_____	_____	_____	_____
HDL cholesterol level	_____	_____	_____	_____
LDL cholesterol level	_____	_____	_____	_____
Triglyceride level	_____	_____	_____	_____

## How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org) to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org).  
We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.  
Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

## What are the Warning Signs of Heart Attack and Stroke?

### Warning Signs of Heart Attack:

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort with one or more of these symptoms:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Other signs including breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

### Warning Signs of Stroke:

- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

Learn to recognize a stroke. Time lost is brain lost.

Call 9-1-1... Get to a hospital immediately if you experience signs of a heart attack or stroke!

## Do you have questions or comments for your doctor or nurse?

- Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

What about other fats? \_\_\_\_\_

How often should I have my levels checked? \_\_\_\_\_

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