

## Cholesterol: The Good, Bad and the Confusing

All of us are familiar with that confusing print-out you get from your doctor about your blood work and then your doctor says your cholesterol total is too high. This can be very confusing and even alarming at the same time. Unfortunately, that total number does not tell you exactly what is going on with your cholesterol. Many factors come into play when determining if you are at risk or not.



Cholesterol is a natural fat found in your body and is necessary for producing certain hormones and for building cell walls. Of course, you have heard that “high cholesterol” is very dangerous and can ultimately lead to heart disease. However, you should know exactly what your good cholesterol (HDL) and your bad cholesterol (LDL) levels are. Just because your total is 200 or slightly above does not mean you have a cholesterol problem. There are other factors to consider:

- \* Heredity
- \* Nutrition
- \* Exercise
- \* Body Weight

Exercise raises the “good” cholesterol in your body, while eating a heart healthy diet can lower your “bad” cholesterol; therefore, your total numbers could be effected.

The guidelines you should follow are:

	LDL	HDL	TOTAL
High	above 159	less than 35	above 239
Medium	130-159	n/a	200-239
Average	below 130	above 60	below 200

If you look at the chart and you want your results to be average or desirable but your chart reads in the med.-high range, you need to make some changes in your lifestyle. Here are a few things you might want to do:

1. Start a more intense work out program- increasing your cardiovascular work helps to raise the HDL's and lowers your body weight.
2. Reduce the fat in your meals by eliminating butter, high-fat processed meats like sausage and bacon, cheese, whole milk and oils.
3. Limit your packaged products.
4. Reduce cholesterol causing foods like egg yolks, pre-made cakes, cookies, muffins and fried foods.