



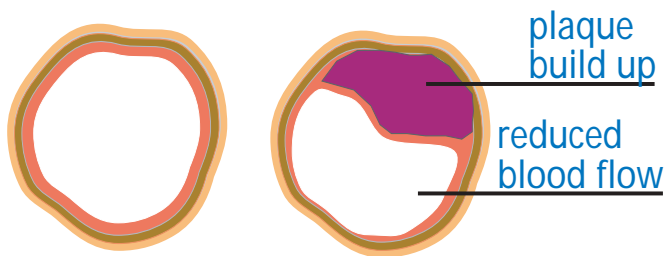
Do You Know Your *Cholesterol Numbers?*

Cholesterol is a fatty, waxy substance produced naturally in the liver. In order to function normally, your body needs small amounts of cholesterol. Cholesterol in large amounts is dangerous because it can leave deposits in your arteries, which makes your heart work too hard and contributes to hardening of the arteries.

Fat deposits develop slowly in our arteries as we get older. Too much cholesterol in your blood makes these deposits show up more quickly.

Normal Artery

Artery with Deposits



What does it mean to have high cholesterol?

You may have been told by your health care professional that you have high cholesterol. Although high cholesterol has no symptoms, it is a serious health concern.

Many people in the United States have high cholesterol. If your cholesterol is too high, you are at greater risk for hardening of the arteries, which can lead to heart attack and stroke.

By taking control of your high cholesterol, you can avoid or delay these health problems later.

What tests are used?

You need a blood test to find out if you have high cholesterol. Ask your doctor to order this test. It is

usually called a lipid panel, but may be called by similar names. The lipid panel measures:

- Total Cholesterol
- LDL (Low Density Lipid Level), the “lousy” cholesterol
- HDL (High Density Lipid Level), the “healthy” cholesterol
- Triglycerides, another important fat in the blood

When you have a lipid panel test, be sure to ask your doctor for the numbers, and write them down.

The normal numbers are:

TEST	GOAL
Total cholesterol	No more than 200mg/dL
LDL cholesterol (“lousy” cholesterol)	No more than 100mg/dL
HDL cholesterol (“healthy” cholesterol)	More than 45mg/dL in men More than 55mg/dL in women
Triglycerides	No more than 150mg/dL

How often do you need the test?

It depends on your age and your results. The American Heart Association says that we should have our first test at age 20. If the results are normal, then get the test every 5 years.

If the results of your test are not normal, ask your doctor when he or she will check the test again. So that the lipid panel test is accurate, do not eat or drink anything but water for 9 to 12 hours before having your blood taken.

Call your doctor for a lipid panel test today!

Resources

Visit our Web site at www.carefirst.com
Click on *My Care First*, our health and
wellness page.

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
800-575-WELL
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/index.htm>

National Library of Medicine
888-346-3656