

Cholesterol Levels - Understanding Good and Bad Cholesterol Levels

Contributed by Webmaster

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Most of us understand that our cholesterol level is important; but many people don't understand the importance of good and bad cholesterol. Cholesterol is a substance found naturally in our cells and bloodstream that performs several necessary functions. But too much of it can lead to an increased chance of a stroke or heart attack. Around 42 million Americans suffer from high cholesterol.

Cholesterol falls into two basic types -- good cholesterol, also known as HDL; and bad type, also known as LDL. HDL is good because the particles actually remove cholesterol from the artery walls and dispose of them through the liver. However, LDL is bad as it actually deposits cholesterol on the artery walls, eventually leading to a build-up that narrows the arteries.

A person's total cholesterol is the sum of their LDL and HDL levels; and just to add to the confusion, we all also have levels of VLDL (very low density) and IDL (intermediate density.) These levels are determined by not only what we eat, but heredity factors as well -- hypercholesterolemia, in which the liver is unable to adequately remove cholesterol, is a common inherited condition.

Cholesterol levels are generally measured in milligrams per deciliter of blood (usually abbreviated as mg/dl). Generally speaking, a level below 200 mg/dl is considered to be good; while a level that is somewhere between 200 and 239 mg/dl is considered to be borderline high risk. If you fall into this category, it's a good idea to start thinking about a healthier diet.

A level of over 240 mg/dl is considered to be high risk; in fact if your level falls within this range, statistically you have twice the risk of heart disease as a person with a level under 200. If your cholesterol level is over 240, it is dangerously high and you should definitely think about making some changes in your diet, exercising more and giving up smoking if applicable.

Levels of this disease can also be determined by just measuring the LDL; in fact, some experts advise that it is a better indication than measuring the different types of cholesterol combined. In general, the lower a person's LDL or bad cholesterol, the lower their risk of a heart attack. A healthy level is considered to be under 129 mg/dl; a level of 130 to 189 is high; and a score of 190 or over is too high.

Triglyceride is a form of body fat and different levels of this substance can also help to influence the total. If you have excess triglycerides, you are probably going to have high levels of bad cholesterol as well; so it's even more important to change your diet and routine. A healthy level is under 150 mg/dl; high is anywhere from 150 to 499; and over 500 is very high.

Not all cholesterol is bad. But if you haven't had yours checked in a while; take the time to check that your numbers are where they should be.

Emeka Ezidiegwu is a Webmaster, author, and Internet marketer. If you're informed by this article, please visit us for more related and informational articles at Onlinemedicineinfo, starting with: [lipitor side effects](#) or [cholesterol lowering info](#) plus much more.