

Delta Gamma Well Aware

Encompasses eight dimensions: Social, Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, Vocational, Intellectual, Financial and Leadership Development

Cholesterol – Know Your Numbers

What is Cholesterol?

- Cholesterol is found in all cells of the body and is a waxy, fat-like substance used to digest foods, make hormones and synthesize Vitamin D. It can also be found in the foods you eat.
- Because blood and cholesterol do not mix (much like oil and water), cholesterol is carried in small packages called lipoproteins, in order to travel in the bloodstream. These small packages are made of fat on the inside and proteins on the outside, and there are two kinds of lipoproteins that carry cholesterol throughout the body:
 - **LDL** (low density lipoprotein) – often referred to as **“bad cholesterol.”** High levels can lead to artery blockages; the higher the LDL level in your blood, the greater chance you have of getting heart disease.
 - **HDL** (high density lipoprotein) – often referred to as **“good cholesterol.”** HDL carries cholesterol from other parts of the body back to your liver, where it is removed from your body. The higher your HDL cholesterol level, the lower your chance of getting heart disease.

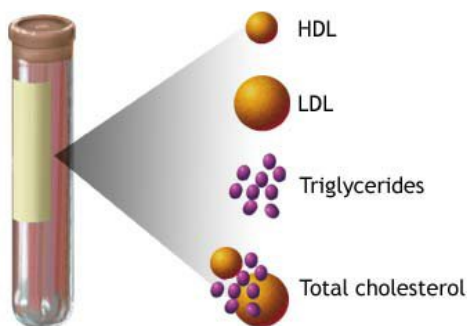
Why is Cholesterol Important?

- High blood cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease, the number one killer of American women.
- When there is too much cholesterol in your blood, it builds up in the walls of your arteries (plaque). Over time, this buildup causes the arteries to harden and narrow (atherosclerosis), which slows or blocks blood flow to the heart.
- High blood cholesterol does not cause symptoms, and many women are unaware if they have high cholesterol.

What Do Your Cholesterol Numbers Mean?

- Beginning at age 20, everyone should have their cholesterol measured at least once every five years.
- The most comprehensive blood cholesterol test is a lipoprotein profile, which is done after a 9-12 hour fast and gives information about total cholesterol, LDL, HDL and triglycerides (another form of fat in your blood).

A lipoprotein profile measures the level of cholesterol in the blood



Total Cholesterol Level	Category
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200-239 mg/dL	Borderline High
240 mg/dL and above	High

Triglyceride Level	Triglyceride Category
150-199 mg/dL	Borderline high
200 mg/dL and above	Very 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	LDL Cholesterol Category
40 mg/dL	Low/risk factor for developing heart disease
60 mg/dL and above	Optimal/ lower risk for heart disease

*Measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.

What Affects Cholesterol Levels?

- Diet – saturated fat and cholesterol in the food you eat causes your blood cholesterol level to go up.
- Weight and Physical Activity– in addition to being a risk factor for heart disease, being overweight tends to increase your cholesterol.
- Age and Gender – as women age, specifically after menopause, their cholesterol levels rise.
- Heredity – genetics partly determine the amount of cholesterol your body makes and high blood cholesterol can run in families.

Treating High Cholesterol

- **Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC)** – to help lower your LDL cholesterol, therapeutic lifestyle changes include a low-saturated fat, low-cholesterol eating plan, weight management and regular physical activity, such as walking, jogging, gardening and playing sports.

Dairy Products

Instead of:	Try:
Sour cream	Low fat yogurt
Whole milk	Skin (nonfat) or 1% milk
Whole milk cheeses	Low fat or part skim milk cheeses

Meats, Poultry and Fish

Instead of:	Try:
High-fat meats	Lean meats, skinless poultry, fish, beans and grains
Bacon and fatback	Skinless chicken or turkey thighs

Fats, Spreads and Dressings

Instead of:	Try:
Lard, butter, shortening	Small amounts of vegetable oil
Regular mayo, regular salad dressing	Mustard and nonfat or low fat salad dressing, yogurt or mayonnaise

Cured Meats

Instead of:	Try:
Pork bacon	Turkey bacon, lean ham, Canadian bacon (choose low sodium versions)
Pork sausage, ground beef and pork	Ground, skinless turkey breast

- **Drug Treatment** – With drug treatment, lifestyle changes must be integrated; cholesterol lowering drugs include statins, bile acid sequestrants, nicotinic acids, fibric acids and cholesterol absorption inhibitors.
- It goes without saying that other risk factors such as smoking must be controlled when attempting to lower high cholesterol.

Wellness Resources

This information is a summary from the following resources:

National Cholesterol Education Program, <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep/>
UC, Berkeley Wellness Letter, January 2005

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