

High Cholesterol

Who is at Risk?

Did you know...

- Too much cholesterol in the blood can lead to heart disease. Heart disease is the #1 cause of death in the U.S.
- In the U.S., more women than men have high cholesterol.
- 1 in 6 adults (16%) in the U.S. have high Cholesterol.
- Famous people with high cholesterol:
 - Bill Clinton
 - David Letterman



High cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Most of the time there are no symptoms. This is why it is

important to have your doctor check your cholesterol levels often.

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat like substance that your body uses to make vitamin D, hormones and other chemicals. Your body makes cholesterol. It is also found in animal products you eat. It comes in the form of 'saturated fats' and 'trans fats'.

Cholesterol travels in your blood in small packages called lipoproteins. There are two kinds of lipoproteins : low-density lipoprotein (LDL), and high-density lipoprotein (HDL). LDL is known as the "bad" cholesterol,

and HDL is known as the good cholesterol.

Your body needs both LDL and HDL in to work properly. HDL (good) helps keep the LDL (bad) from building up in the arteries that provide blood to the heart. High levels of LDL may increase our risk for heart disease. A healthy level of HDL can protect against heart attack and stroke.

What is a healthy cholesterol level?

- **Less than 200 mg/dL** of total cholesterol is considered to be a healthy level.
- **Above 240 mg/dL** is an unhealthy total cholesterol level. If your cholesterol is above 240 mg/dL you are more likely to have heart disease than someone whose level is less than 200 mg/dL.

RISK FACTORS:

Knowing the risk factors can help you find ways to lower your chance of getting high cholesterol. The more risk factors you have, the higher your chance of getting high cholesterol. Some risk factors you can control and

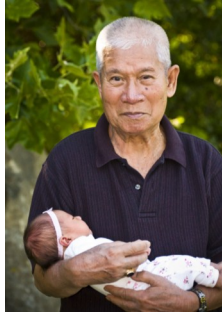
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High Cholesterol (continued)

others you cannot.

Risk factors you can not control include:

Age: As we get older, the chance of having high cholesterol levels are increased.



Family History: For some people, family history is a major risk factor for high cholesterol. If you have one first-degree relative (brother, sister or parent) with high cholesterol you could be 2 (women) to 2.5 (men) times more likely to have high cholesterol levels. If you have 2 first degree relatives, you could be 2.5 (men) to 3.5 (women) more likely to have high cholesterol levels.

Risk factors that you can control include:

Diet: Eating food high in fats can increase how much LDL (bad) cholesterol you have.

Weight: Being overweight can lower your HDL (good) and increase the LDL (bad) cholesterol. It can also increase your total cholesterol level.

Exercise: A lack of exercise leads to higher cholesterol levels and possible weight gain.

Other Risk Factors:

- Smoking
- High Blood Pressure

What Can You Do to lower your risk?

- Exercise causes your body to produce more HDL (good) cholesterol.
- Cook meals that do not call for large amounts of meat. Ask your doctor about what foods are best for you.
- Avoid saturated and trans fats.
- Do not smoke.
- Work with your doctor to maintain healthy cholesterol levels.
- If needed, your doctor may give you medicines to increase your HDL levels.

If you are concerned about your chance of having high cholesterol, you can:

- 1) Collect your family's health history.
- 2) Write down what you eat for one week.
- 2) Share your family health history and your diet with your doctor.
- 3) Find out if you should be screened for high cholesterol levels.

For more information go to:

WWW.CDC.GOV/CHOLESTEROL/



The Genomedical Connection...

This is a joint project between Moses Cone Health System, Duke University and UNCG. The goal is to create a model system that doctors can use to identify patients who are more likely to get diseases like breast cancer, colon cancer and blood clots. Once these patients are found, doctors can develop personalized medical management plans to reduce their risk for disease, or diagnose the disease early, when more treatment options are available.

For more information about our program go to
www.genomedical.com