

Happy Valentines Day: A Gift to your Heart!

Most Americans will have some form of heart disease. Scary but true. However, with appropriate lifestyle changes the damage caused by high cholesterol can be prevented.

What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is one of the major lipids (fats) in the body and is essential for cell growth and nourishment. The other major fats are called triglycerides. Cholesterol is classified into several categories. These categories include HDL (good) LDL (Bad) and VLDL (ugly). HDL cholesterol helps to clear the LDL Cholesterol. VLDL cholesterol is the precursor to the LDL Cholesterol. LDL cholesterol and Triglycerides are known for their stickiness and causing your blood to be thicker.

Why be concerned about Cholesterol?

High levels of LDL and VLDL cholesterol lead to the development of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). This occurs as a result of cholesterol accumulating in the walls of blood vessels (arteries). These blood vessels become narrow and therefore limit the amount of blood that flows through them. If this blockage occurs in the blood vessels of the heart, coronary heart disease (CHD) will develop and a “heart attack” may occur. HDL cholesterol is responsible for clearing the VLDL and LDL cholesterol from your blood vessels. If you have low HDL cholesterol, you are at higher risk of experiencing a coronary event.

How will I know if my cholesterol is out of control?

Your LDL, VLDL triglycerides and total cholesterol may be elevated without your knowing it because there are no early symptoms, so therefore, you must have it checked (measured). But to truly be an active participant in prevention of heart disease you must ask what your levels are. When you know these numbers you can use the guidelines below to improve your health.

Classification	Total Cholesterol	LDL Cholesterol	HDL Cholesterol
Desirable	Less than 200mg/dl	less than 100	more than 45
Borderline	200-239 mg/dl	100-130	35-45
Poor	240+mg/dl	130+	less than 35

Classification	Triglycerides	VLDL Cholesterol
Desirable	Less than 150	6-20 mg/dl
Borderline	150-200	20-35 mg/dl
Poor	200+	35+

I want to:

Lower Total Cholesterol: Eat a balanced low calorie, low fat diet
Exercise daily for at least 30 minutes

Increase HDL Cholesterol: Increase consumption of monounsaturated fats (canola oil and olive oil)
Stop smoking | Increase activity in your lifestyle
Ask my doctor about fish oil supplementation

Decrease LDL Cholesterol: Stop smoking | Eat fewer high fat foods | Increase the fiber in your diet (25-35g/day)

Decrease Triglyceride: Reduce Alcohol Intake | Control Your blood sugar | Stop smoking
Eat fewer high fat foods | Ask my doctor about fish oil supplementation

Decrease VLDL Cholesterol: Eat fewer high fat foods | Increase the fiber in your diet (25-35g/day) | Stop Smoking