

What Do Your Cholesterol Numbers Mean?



You're getting your cholesterol checked at least once per year, but do you know your cholesterol numbers, and more importantly, what those numbers mean?

It's best to have more than just your total cholesterol tested. A blood test called a lipoprotein or cholesterol profile gives you a better indication of your risk for heart disease.

Here's what the test measures:

- **Total cholesterol** – a measure of the total amount of blood cholesterol
- **LDL cholesterol** – the “bad” cholesterol; the main source of damaging buildup or blockage in the arteries
- **HDL cholesterol** – the “good” cholesterol; assists in the removal of cholesterol from the body
- **Triglycerides** – another form of fat in your blood; high levels may be a sign of a cholesterol problem that contributes to heart disease

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If you haven't already done so, call your provider's office to request a copy of your most recent cholesterol test results and then compare them to the table below.

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL LEVEL	TOTAL CHOLESTEROL CATEGORY
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200-239 mg/dL	Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above	High

LDL CHOLESTEROL LEVEL (bad)	LDL CHOLESTEROL CATEGORY (bad)
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 (good)	HDL CHOLESTEROL CATEGORY (good)
Less than 40	Low
Equal to or greater than 60	Optimal

TRIGLYCERIDES	TRIGLYCERIDES CATEGORY
Less than 150 mg/dL	Optimal
150-199 mg/dL	Borderline high
200 mg/dL and above	High

SOURCE: National Cholesterol Education Program
 "High Blood Cholesterol: What You Need To Know." 2002