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NEWS

Cholesterol: What you need to know

Cholesterol is a waxy or fatty substance found in your cells that, depending on the type, can either help or hurt you in the fight against heart disease.

The first thing that you need to do is **know your numbers!** Go get your cholesterol levels checked by a doctor or other qualified health professional. The results will show the levels of total cholesterol in your blood, broken down into three types:

LDL – This is sometimes called “bad” cholesterol, as it can lead to a buildup of plaque in the arteries; think the lower, the better.

HDL – Also known as “good” cholesterol, as it helps to remove excess cholesterol from your body; think the higher, the better.

Triglycerides – This isn’t cholesterol, but rather another type of fat found in your blood that, in high numbers, can increase the risk of heart disease.

Already know your cholesterol numbers?

Check out the American Heart Association’s *Check. Change. Control.* 10-year risk calculator at ccccalculator.ccctracker.com. Share your results with your doctor and discuss what you can do to take or maintain control of your cholesterol levels. This could include:

Eating – Reducing the amount of saturated fat in your diet can help reduce your cholesterol levels.

Losing – Being overweight can increase your cholesterol levels, leading to an increased risk of heart disease.

Moving – Increased exercise can increase your “good” HDL cholesterol levels while decreasing your “bad” LDL levels. It can also lead to weight loss.

Quitting – Tobacco products can increase “bad” LDL cholesterol levels while decreasing “good” HDL levels.

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Sources:

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