

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a soft and waxy substance in your body. Everyone's body makes cholesterol. Cholesterol also comes from the foods you eat.



Cholesterol and plaque buildup

When there is too much cholesterol in the blood it can:

- Build up in your arteries
- Harden your arteries
- Form plaque inside the walls of your arteries

Plaque can build up inside your arteries. Too much plaque makes it harder for the blood to flow through the arteries. If plaque breaks open, a blood clot can form in the artery. The blood clot can block the blood flow to the heart and brain. This can put you at risk of heart attack or stroke.

TIP

It is a good health habit to know how much cholesterol is in your blood.

Continued from other side

How do I know if I have high cholesterol?

Your health care provider may want to check your cholesterol with a blood test. The name of this test is a lipid panel or lipid profile. Your health care provider will choose when this test is right for you. Health care providers take into account your age and if you show any risk of high cholesterol or cardiovascular disease. This includes problems with your heart or blood vessels.

The lipid panel test includes:

- LDL (bad) cholesterol or LDL-C levels
- HDL (good) cholesterol or HDL-C levels
- Triglyceride levels
- Total cholesterol levels

TIP

Ask your health care provider if you need your cholesterol checked.

