

# What do cholesterol numbers mean?

Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams of cholesterol per deciliter of blood (mg/dL).

A higher level of LDL (bad) cholesterol is associated with a higher risk of heart disease or stroke. The optimal level of LDL (bad) cholesterol is often defined as less than 100 mg/dL.

Your health care provider will do a lipid panel or lipid profile to test your blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Ask your health care provider to explain the meaning of the results.



## TIP

Talk to your health care provider about your LDL (bad) cholesterol goal.

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Here are guidelines for LDL (bad) cholesterol:

- An LDL cholesterol level of less than 130 mg/dL is recommended if you have 2 or more risk factors for heart disease.
- An LDL cholesterol level of less than 100 mg/dL is recommended if you have heart disease or diabetes.
- An LDL cholesterol level of less than 70 mg/dL may be a reasonable option for some people.

An HDL (good) cholesterol level of less than 40 mg/dL is considered “low” and is associated with a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.

An HDL (good) cholesterol level of 60 mg/dL or more is considered “high” and is associated with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke.

## TIP

Ask your health care provider about these guidelines and your test results.

