

Why is high cholesterol bad?

Too much LDL (bad) cholesterol can build up in the walls of your arteries. Over time, this buildup can lower blood flow. It can also cause coronary artery disease. Coronary artery disease affects the blood vessels in your heart.

The types of fats in your blood

Cholesterol and other fats are called lipids. Lipids cannot dissolve in your blood. They have to be moved to parts of your body by special carriers. These carriers are called lipoproteins. Lipoproteins are substances that your body makes.

The most common of these carriers is low-density lipoprotein. Another name for this lipoprotein is LDL. LDL carries “bad” cholesterol through your body.

Another carrier is high-density lipoprotein. The other name for this lipoprotein is HDL. HDL carries “good” cholesterol through your body.



TIP

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

Continued from other side

LDL or “bad” cholesterol

Too much LDL cholesterol in your blood can build up in your arteries and form plaque. This buildup of plaque can cause your blood vessels to harden. This can increase your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

HDL or “good” cholesterol

HDL is often called “good” because it can carry “bad” cholesterol away from the walls of your arteries. A high level of HDL may be linked with a lower risk of having heart disease or stroke.

Triglycerides

Triglycerides are another type of fat in your blood. Your body uses triglycerides as a source of energy or stores them as fat.

Having high levels of triglycerides is usually not good for your health. If your triglyceride level is high, it usually means you also have a higher risk

TIP

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



of cardiovascular disease. Examples of cardiovascular disease are heart attack and stroke.

Total cholesterol

The total cholesterol level is a measure of all the cholesterol in your blood, including LDL and HDL.