

# Control your high cholesterol

## Your body (and your wallet) will thank you!

Bring this sheet to your next doctor visit.

### What is high cholesterol and why is it a problem?

High cholesterol means your bloodstream has too much cholesterol, which is a waxy, fat-like substance. Your body naturally makes cholesterol and a type of fat called triglycerides.

#### Problem fats

**LDL** cholesterol (low density lipoprotein) and **triglycerides**



They're like tiny traffic jams that clog your blood vessels



#### Healthy fat

**HDL** cholesterol (high density lipoprotein)



It's like tiny tow trucks that clear away the traffic jam in your blood vessels



Health problems happen when you have extra cholesterol and triglycerides from eating high-fat foods. High cholesterol can also run in families, even in people who usually eat healthy foods.

If not treated, high cholesterol and triglycerides can:



Damage your heart and other organs and lead to serious health problems such as heart failure, stroke, or painful muscle cramps in your legs (peripheral artery disease)



Cost a lot if you get one of these health problems and have high medical bills

Luckily, you can help improve this problem over time by eating healthy foods, being active, and taking any cholesterol medicines your doctor may prescribe.

## 2 ways to lower your cholesterol and triglycerides

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### Ask your doctor to check your cholesterol and triglycerides

Your doctor will do a blood test to see if you have high cholesterol or high triglycerides, then help you create an action plan to lower them. Ask these questions:

Will I need medicine to help lower my cholesterol?  Yes  No  Maybe

How often should I get my cholesterol checked? \_\_\_\_\_ times each \_\_\_\_\_ (year, month, week, day)

■ What are my cholesterol and triglyceride numbers? Write them below:

My check-ups:	LDL “bad” cholesterol	HDL “good” cholesterol	Total cholesterol	Triglyceride fat
	☆ Goal: Aim to <b>lower</b> this to less than _____ mg/dL	☆ Goal: Aim to <b>raise</b> this to at least _____ mg/dL	☆ Goal: Aim to <b>lower</b> this to less than _____ mg/dL	☆ Goal: Aim to <b>lower</b> this to less than _____ mg/dL
<b>1<sup>st</sup> visit</b> Date: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> visit</b> Date: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> visit</b> Date: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## 2 Get active, eat healthy, know your numbers

Ask my doctor if I need to lose weight – if I need to, I’ll lose weight slowly by following a healthy eating plan and being more active

Be active for 30 minutes a day most days of the week

Try:



Know my blood pressure and blood sugar levels

Eat less cholesterol and triglycerides by eating more fresh fruits and veggies at home and less pre-prepared foods and restaurant meals

Try:



Drink less than 1-2 servings of alcohol each day (a serving is a 12 ounce glass of beer, a 5 ounce glass of wine, or a 1½ ounce shot of a hard liquor)

Try:



Quit smoking – I’ll call the free Tobacco Quitline: **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669) or work with my doctor

### Learn more

Visit these websites and enter “cholesterol” or “triglycerides” in the site’s Search box:



Million Hearts:  
[millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov)



American Heart Association:  
[heart.org](http://heart.org)



Mayo Clinic:  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)