



# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Take Charge Of Your Heart Health: Know Your Cholesterol Levels

(NAPSA)—If you thought cancer was the leading cause of female deaths in the United States, think again. Every minute, approximately one woman dies from heart and vascular diseases—that's nearly half a million women each year. In fact, more women die of heart disease than all cancers combined.

The good news is that you can take steps to prevent heart disease. You can reduce your heart disease risk factors, including excess weight, high blood sugar levels and high cholesterol, just by making simple lifestyle changes, such as increasing your physical activity, making nutritious food choices and managing stress in healthy ways.

### An Important First Step

Knowing your cholesterol levels is an important first step toward taking charge of one's heart health. In recognition of National Cholesterol Education Month this September, the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women movement is urging women across the country to talk to their doctors, learn their cholesterol levels and better understand their risk for heart disease.

There are two types of cholesterol: the "good cholesterol," also called HDL, and the "bad cholesterol," called LDL. It's important to understand the difference and to know the levels of "good" and "bad" cholesterol in your blood. Too much LDL cholesterol in the blood can clog the arteries,

What Your Cholesterol Levels Mean	
LDL Cholesterol Levels	
Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
100 to 129 mg/dL	Near Optimal
130 to 159	Borderline High
160 to 189	High
190 and above	Very High 

increasing your risk of heart disease and stroke, while high levels of HDL cholesterol seem to protect against heart attack.

### High Cholesterol Can Be Controlled

"Many women are unaware that high cholesterol can be controlled and managed by taking small steps, such as eating foods low in cholesterol and saturated fat, being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight," said Jennifer H. Mieres, M.D., associate professor of medicine and director of nuclear cardiology at New York University. "Working with your doctor to make these steps a part of everyday life can provide long-term benefits for your health and your heart."

### Take the Go Red Heart CheckUp

The American Heart Association started the Go Red For Women movement to better educate women about their personal risk for heart disease. This September, with Merck & Co., Inc. as a national

sponsor, Go Red For Women urges women across America to visit your doctor to discuss your heart health and know your numbers—cholesterol as well as fasting blood sugar and blood pressure levels.

With these numbers, you can visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org) to take the Go Red Heart Checkup—an online tool that helps you identify your risk factors and provides a personalized heart health action plan you can follow. You can also play the Heart Smarts Challenge at [www.goredwithmerck.com](http://www.goredwithmerck.com) for a chance to receive a free copy of the heart-healthy Go Red For Women "Light and Easy Recipes" cookbook.

By being a part of the Go Red For Women movement, you are making an investment in your own health and that of those you love. Join Go Red For Women and spread the word.

For more information about cholesterol and heart disease, visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org) or contact your local American Heart Association chapter.

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*Note To Editors: September is National Cholesterol Education Month. Many women don't realize that high cholesterol is a major controllable risk factor for heart disease. Approximately one woman dies from heart and vascular diseases every minute—that's nearly half a million women each year.*

*The American Heart Association started the Go Red For Women movement to better educate women about their personal risk for heart disease. With Merck & Co., Inc. as a national sponsor, the movement continues to help women learn to be proactive about their heart health.*