

# Know Your Cholesterol

## The Good And Bad Of Cholesterol: What You Need To Know

(NAPSA)—Cholesterol can be both good and bad. With coronary heart disease the single largest killer of Americans, managing cholesterol levels and taking care of your heart can help you lead a longer, healthier life. That's why all Americans should know what their—and their children's—cholesterol levels are, how those levels affect cardiovascular health and how a healthy diet low in dietary cholesterol, saturated fat and trans fat can help control cholesterol.

These tips from the American Heart Association may help.

### Know what cholesterol is

Cholesterol is a soft, fatlike, waxy substance found in the bloodstream and in all your body's cells. It plays an important role in a healthy body, aiding in the production of cell membranes and some hormones. Too high a level of cholesterol in the blood, however, can present a major risk for coronary heart disease, which can lead to heart attack or stroke.

### Know the numbers

- LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is considered “bad” cholesterol because it can build up as plaque and clog arteries. An optimal level of LDL cholesterol is less than 100 mg/dL. A level of 160 mg/dL or higher increases the risk of heart disease.

- HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is the “good” cholesterol. Medical experts believe it removes excess cholesterol from the arteries and protects against heart attack. Ideal HDL cholesterol levels are 40 mg/dL or more.

- Triglyceride (TG) is a form of fat, and many people with heart disease and high LDL levels have high TG levels, as do diabetics and obese people.



**Live Healthier—Get your cholesterol levels measured, exercise and eat heart-healthy foods.**

### Steps for prevention

To control your cholesterol, the American Heart Association recommends you get total, LDL and HDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels measured, maintain a healthy weight, be active, follow your healthcare professional's recommendations and eat foods low in saturated fat and trans fats, as well as cholesterol.

### Use the heart-check mark

Smart eating can help control cholesterol levels. So, when grocery shopping, use the red heart with the white check mark to quickly and reliably find heart-healthy foods certified by the American Heart Association. Products bearing the heart-check mark meet the Association's nutrition criteria for being low in saturated fat and cholesterol. To make food shopping even easier, log on to [heartcheckmark.org](http://heartcheckmark.org) before you go. With just a click, create a list full of certified products tailored to your family's needs, print it and go.