



American Heart Association.

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?



Cholesterol is a waxy substance found throughout your body. Your body makes all the cholesterol it needs for important jobs, such as helping to build cells and to make certain hormones. When cholesterol is too high, it can put you at a higher risk of heart disease or stroke.



Where does cholesterol come from?

Cholesterol comes from two different places

1

Your liver. Your body makes all the cholesterol it needs to help build cells and make certain hormones.

2

The foods you eat. Cholesterol is found in animal products such as meat, eggs, cheese and milk. Some of these foods may also be high in saturated fat. Eating too much saturated fat can raise LDL (bad) cholesterol.

The bad kind of cholesterol

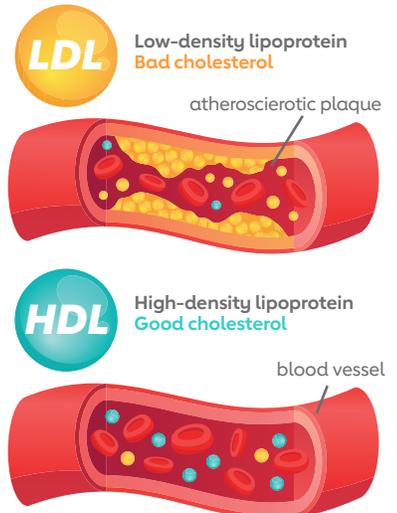
Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol is known as the bad kind of cholesterol. High levels of LDL cholesterol can lead to heart disease and stroke. Lower LDL levels are linked to better heart and brain health, and the right level for you depends on factors related to your health, such as age and family history. For some people, an LDL goal may be below 100 mg/dL. For others, it may be 70 mg/dL or 55 mg/dL for people at very high risk of a heart attack or stroke. Your health care professional can help determine the goal that's right for you.

The good kind of cholesterol

High-density lipoprotein (HDL) is the good kind of cholesterol. High levels of HDL cholesterol can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Triglycerides contribute to high cholesterol

Triglycerides are a type of fat in your body. A high level of triglycerides can contribute to cholesterol buildup in your body.



Check your cholesterol to lower your risk of heart attack or stroke

It's important to check your cholesterol to make sure you're at a healthy level. Healthy lifestyle habits such as eating a healthy and balanced diet, moving your body and not using tobacco can all help you better manage your cholesterol levels. Talk with your health care professional about the best treatment plan for you.

Learn more at [heart.org/Cholesterol](https://www.heart.org/Cholesterol).