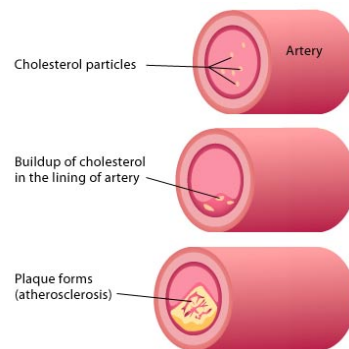


What Are High Blood Cholesterol and Triglycerides?

What is high blood cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a soft, fat-like, waxy substance found in the bloodstream and in all your body's cells. It's normal to have cholesterol. Cholesterol is an important part of a healthy body because it's used for producing cell membranes and some hormones, and serves other needed bodily functions

Cholesterol and other fats can't dissolve in your blood. To travel to your cells, they use special carriers called lipoproteins. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol is often called "the bad kind." When you have too much LDL cholesterol in your blood, it can join with fats and other substances to build up in the inner walls of your arteries. The arteries can become clogged and narrow, and blood flow is reduced. If this buildup of plaque ruptures, a blood clot may form at this location or a piece may break off and travel in the bloodstream. If a blood clot blocks the blood flow to your heart, it causes a heart attack. If a blood clot blocks an artery leading to or in the brain, a stroke results.



A "good kind" of cholesterol, on the other hand, is called high-density lipoprotein (HDL). It carries harmful cholesterol away from the arteries and helps protect you from heart attack and stroke. It's better to have a lot of HDL cholesterol in your blood.

Triglyceride is a form of fat made in the body. Elevated triglycerides can be due to overweight/obesity, physical inactivity, cigarette smoking, excess alcohol consumption and a diet very high in carbohydrates. People with high triglycerides often have a high total cholesterol level, including a high LDL level and a low HDL level. Many people with heart disease and/or diabetes also have high triglyceride levels.

What about fats?

There are different kinds of fats in the food we eat. **Saturated fat** is the kind that raises blood cholesterol, so it's not good for you. Avoid animal fats like lard and meat fat, coconut oil, palm oil and palm kernel oil.

Trans fat comes from adding hydrogen to vegetable oils and tend to raise blood cholesterol. It's used in commercial baked goods and for cooking in most restaurants and fast-food chains. It's also in milk and beef.

Polyunsaturated fats are found in vegetable oils and fish oils. These tend to lower blood cholesterol when consumed in moderation and used to replace saturated or trans fats in the diet.

Monounsaturated fats are found in olive, canola, peanut, and sunflower oils. In a low-saturated-fat diet, they may lower blood cholesterol.

How can I lower the bad Cholesterol in my blood?

- ✓ Cut down on foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol. These include fatty meats, butter, cheese, whole-milk dairy products, egg yolks, shellfish, other fish, organ meats, poultry and solid fats (foods from animals).
 - ✓ Do physical activities at least 30 minutes on most or all days of the week.
 - ✓ Eat more foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and high in fiber. These include fruits and vegetables, whole grains and grain products, beans and peas, fat-free and low-fat milk products, lean meats and poultry without skin, fatty fish, and nuts and seed in limited amounts.
 - ✓ Lose weight if you need to.
 - ✓ Ask your doctor about medicines that can reduce cholesterol (not recommended for all patients).
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How can I learn more?

Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk. Also, if people in your family have had a stroke or heart disease you are at a higher risk.

