

**Here are several definitions to help you understand cholesterol:**

**BLOOD CHOLESTEROL** - the cholesterol circulating in the blood-stream also called serum cholesterol. It is measured as mg/dl (milligrams per deciliter) of blood.

**HDL CHOLESTEROL** (High Density Lipoproteins) - the part of blood cholesterol that helps to prevent heart disease (good cholesterol).

**LDL CHOLESTEROL** (Low Density Lipoproteins) - the part of blood cholesterol that can lead to plaque buildup in the arteries and cause atherosclerosis also known as hardening of the arteries.

**DIETARY CHOLESTEROL** - the cholesterol that comes naturally from only animal products (like meat, eggs, whole milk and cheese). It may increase blood cholesterol.

**SATURATED FATS** - are fats, usually solid at room temperature, like butter, bacon or lard, solid shortenings, some margarines, many dairy substitutes, chocolate, and some vegetable oils (coconut and palm oils). Saturated fats tend to raise blood cholesterol levels.

**POLYUNSATURATED FATS** - are fats from most plant sources such as soybean or corn oil. Polyunsaturated fats reduce blood cholesterol levels.

**MONOUNSATURATED FATS** - include olive oil, canola oil and fat in avocado. Monounsaturated fats may lower blood cholesterol levels.

**OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS** - are found in fish, beans, nuts and wheat germ oil. This specific part of fats may reduce blood cholesterol levels.

**HYDROGENATED** - a liquid oil chemically treated to harden it and make it saturated.

**SERUM LIPIDS** - the fats circulating in your blood stream also known as blood lipids.



Atlantic County Executive  
Dennis Levinson  
Atlantic County Board of Commissioners  
Maureen Kern, Chairwoman

## Atlantic County Division of Public Health

# Cholesterol and Your Good Health



### **Cholesterol is:**

- a type of fat essential to life and carried in the blood
- made by the body based on genetics and lifestyle
- received in the diet from animal foods like red meat, butter, eggs, whole milk and cheese

### **Why all the concern about it?**

Too much cholesterol in the blood increases the chance of having heart disease, the number one killer in the U.S. It also increases the risk of stroke and high blood pressure.

### **Who should be concerned about cholesterol?**

**You!** High cholesterol can be a problem for almost any adult, especially if you have a family history of high cholesterol or have unhealthy lifestyle choices like a poor diet, lack of exercise, obesity, or smoke cigarettes. High cholesterol has no symptoms. The only way to know if you have high cholesterol is to have a simple blood test.

### **How much is too much?**

A total cholesterol of 180 to 200 mg/dL or less is considered best. LDL cholesterol is sometimes called "bad" cholesterol. LDL can clog your arteries. You want your LDL to be low. Too much LDL is linked to heart disease and stroke. LDL is most often considered to be too high if it is 190 mg/dL or higher. HDL is referred to as "good" cholesterol. You want your HDL cholesterol to be high. The higher your HDL, the lower your risk of coronary artery disease. HDL cholesterol levels greater than 40 to 60 mg/dL are desired.

## **What can I do to keep my blood cholesterol level normal?**

### **Watch what you eat.**

- Choose a variety of foods from each food group.
- Eat plenty of high fiber foods such as whole grain cereals and breads, fruits and vegetables, dry beans and peas.
- Limit total fat intake.
- Trim fat and skin from meat.
- Limit “fast foods” which are high in fats.
- Boil, broil, bake or roast rather than fry foods.
- Choose lean meat, fish, poultry, and dried beans for protein.
- Use low-fat dairy products such as skim milk, low-fat yogurt.  
*(Children under age 2 should drink whole milk. They need more fat for their growing bodies.)*
- Cut down on butter, margarine, salad dressings and gravies.
- Chill and remove hardened fat from soups and gravies before meal time.
- Limit high cholesterol foods such as organ meats, egg yolks, cream, butter and lard.

**According to the CDC, adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity a week.**

**For example, exercise 5 days a week for 30 minutes each day.**

\* For more information on physical activity visit:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dpcp/prevention/policies\\_practices/physical\\_activity/guidelines.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dpcp/prevention/policies_practices/physical_activity/guidelines.htm)

## **What if I already have high blood cholesterol?**

Follow a personalized cholesterol lowering diet from your doctor, nutritionist, dietitian, health office or the American Heart Association to be sure your special needs are met.

This special diet will be much lower in saturated fat and cholesterol to help reduce blood cholesterol levels.

## **What else can I do to stay “heart healthy”?**

- Stop smoking
- Manage stress
- Be active
- Control high blood pressure

