

CHOLESTEROL



WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

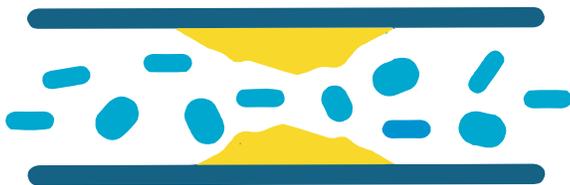
Cholesterol is a soft, waxy and fatty substance found in animal products as well as in the human body. It is necessary for the formation of cell membranes and the production of certain hormones. Excess cholesterol is a risk factor for heart diseases.

WHAT IS HDL OR GOOD CHOLESTEROL?

High-density lipoprotein or HDL is known as “good cholesterol” because it helps eliminate “bad cholesterol” or LDL.

WHAT IS LDL OR BAD CHOLESTEROL?

Low-density lipoprotein or LDL is known as “bad cholesterol” because it tends to accumulate in the arteries, contributing to the development of cardiovascular disease.



WHAT ARE DESIRABLE CHOLESTEROL LEVELS?

Total cholesterol should be at a desirable level, which is under 200 mg/dl. There is a high risk if it is higher than 240 mg/dl. The Cholesterol levels can be measured through a blood test.

The optimum level for HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol) should be at 40 mg/dl or higher in men and 50 mg/dl or higher in women. The optimum level of LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) is less than 100 mg/dl.

WHAT FOODS ARE HIGH IN CHOLESTEROL?

Some foods that are high in cholesterol are:

- Whole Milk
- Cheeses
- Egg Yolks
- Fried Food
- Chicken Skin
- Organ meats such as liver and gizzards
- Crustaceans such as lobster, shrimp and crabs
- High-fat processed meats such as sausage, hot dogs, salami, bologna and chorizo, among others.
- Other meat products such as luncheon meat and corned beef

HOW CAN WE CONTROL CHOLESTEROL?

- You should consume less than 200mg of cholesterol a day
- Limit saturated fats and trans fats
- Consume low fat cheeses and yogurt
- Include more fruit and vegetables (3 to 5 servings a day)
- Read food labels
- Exercise (20 to 30 minutes, at least 3 or 4 times each week)
- Do not smoke
- Take medications prescribed or recommended by your physician

For more information, please call the Health Education and Preventive Services Unit at **787-277-6571**.

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