Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What are my cholesterol numbers?
- What is my risk of heart disease?
- What changes should I make to my diet to help lower my cholesterol?
- What is a healthy weight for me?
- What exercises and activities are best for me?
- Are there medications I can take to lower my risk of heart disease?
- What are the risks and benefits of each treatment option?
- What do I do if I am on a statin and my cholesterol is still too high?
- What should I do to monitor my cholesterol numbers?
- Do I have FH?

Contact Us
If you would like to receive support or need more information, please contact us at:

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Living Longer with Heart Disease

Discussion Guide for Patients & Caregivers
What is Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in our cells. Our liver naturally makes most of the cholesterol we need to do important tasks like digesting fatty foods and making hormones. Cholesterol is an important building block in the membranes that wrap around all the cells in our body.

Cholesterol itself is not bad, but high cholesterol increases your risk of heart disease and stroke. If you have high cholesterol, it is important for you to understand what that means, know your numbers, know your risks, and work with your doctor to create a treatment plan that is right for you.

Know Your Numbers

When it comes to cholesterol, it’s all about the numbers. A blood test called a lipid profile will give you your cholesterol numbers. Here are numbers to know:

- **People have high cholesterol**
  - 1 in 3

- **People have high cholesterol and have it under control**
  - 1 in 3

- **Risk of heart disease for those that don’t have it under control compared to those that do**
  - 2 X

- **Total cholesterol should be less than 200. LDL should be less than 100 or less than 70 if you have heart disease**
  - <200
  - <100
  - <70

Cholesterol travels through the blood on proteins called “lipoproteins.” LDL and HLD are two types of lipoproteins that carry cholesterol throughout the body:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Cholesterol</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LDL + HDL + Triglycerides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LDL (low-density lipoprotein)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HDL (high-density lipoprotein)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Triglycerides</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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High LDL and triglyceride levels can cause plaque, a waxy, sticky substance, to build up on your blood vessel walls. Plaque can harden, narrow and/or clog your arteries causing coronary artery disease (CAD), atherosclerosis, heart attack or stroke.

Familial Hypercholesterolemia, or FH, is a genetic disorder in which a person's LDL cholesterol level can be anywhere from 2 to 6 times higher than normal from birth. Fortunately, FH is very rare. The severity of FH depends on a person's genetic profile.

Treating High Cholesterol

For some people, making healthy changes in what they eat and their activity level, and making other lifestyle changes such as reducing stress and maintaining a healthy weight, will help them lower their cholesterol levels and reduce risks. For others, however, healthy lifestyle changes will not be enough, especially those with a family history of high LDL. Some medications to treat high cholesterol are:

- **Statins** prevent the production of cholesterol in the liver and lower LDL cholesterol.
- **Ezetimibe (EZE)** works by preventing cholesterol from being absorbed in the intestine.
- **Bempedoic acid and BA/EZE tablets** work together to reduce LDL.
- **PCSK9 Inhibitors** (Proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9) prevent the liver’s LDL receptors, which remove cholesterol from the bloodstream, from being destroyed.
- **Icosapent Ethyl** is an innovative medication that can treat high triglycerides.