

## Cholesterol Reduction Strategies

**Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, legumes, and grains, which can help lower LDL in your blood.** Good choices include barley, beans, lentils, oat bran, oatmeal, split peas, apples, bananas, citrus, pears, strawberries, and baked potatoes.

**Limit foods that are high in saturated fat and cholesterol.** These include butter, fatty meats, liver, egg yolks, and full-fat dairy products.

**Avoid foods with trans fats.** These include chips and deep-fried food. Read labels to find out.

**Choose lean meats, fish or skinless poultry. Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products.**

**Choose foods with heart-healthy fats.** Good choices would include canola and olive oils, avocados, walnuts, and almonds. To keep a healthy weight, limit these fats to small servings.

**If you are overweight, lose weight.** Even a small weight loss may help reduce your cholesterol.

**Get moving.** Regular exercise may help lower your LDL and raise your HDL levels. Try for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week.

More information about cholesterol is available from the following websites:

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC),**  
Cardiovascular Health:  
[www.cdc.gov/cvh/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cvh/index.htm)

**American Heart Association:**  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

**National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute:** [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

**USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans:**  
[www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga/index.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga/index.html)

**National Institutes of Health (NIH):**  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/index.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/index.htm)

Town of Greenwich  
Department of Health Laboratory  
Town Hall, Lower Level  
(203) 622-7843  
[www.greenwichct.org](http://www.greenwichct.org)

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## **Greenwich Department of Health Laboratory**

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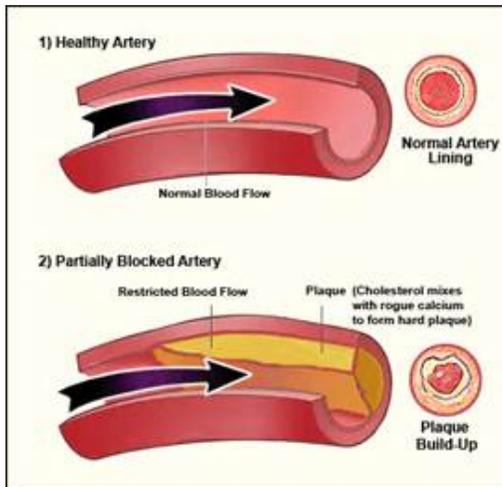
## **CHOLESTEROL TESTING**

- No appointment necessary
- Monday – Friday
- 8 am – 12 pm
- Fingertick blood test
- Results available immediately
- More accurate results obtained after a 9 to 12 hour fast
- Fee charged for test

# CHOLESTEROL

## What is it?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. However, when there is too much in the blood, it can build up on the walls of your arteries, impeding blood flow so that less blood and oxygen can get to the heart. This can lead to heart disease and stroke.



Healthy artery and one partially blocked by cholesterol plaque.

## What are signs and symptoms of high cholesterol?

High cholesterol itself does not have symptoms. Getting your cholesterol checked with a simple blood test is the only way you can know if you are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease.

## What does the blood test measure?

Total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, and triglycerides.

Total cholesterol = HDL + LDL + 20% of triglyceride level.

HDL and LDL: HDL and LDL are lipoproteins, substances found in the blood that function like a taxi service, carrying cholesterol and triglycerides (a type of fat) throughout the body.

**LDL** deposits cholesterol in artery walls, which is why it is commonly known as “bad” cholesterol.

**HDL** helps remove cholesterol from the blood, which is why it is commonly referred to as “good” cholesterol. (HDL – think “Happy”)

Triglycerides: fats formed by the foods we eat. Excess calories, alcohol or sugar in the body turn into triglycerides.

### **Desirable test results**

(all values are in mg/dl)

Total cholesterol	< 200
HDL	> 60
LDL	< 100
Triglycerides	< 150

## Are you at risk for high cholesterol?

About 1 in every 6 adult Americans has high cholesterol. Anyone, including children can develop it. Several factors that increase risk, such as age, sex, and heredity, are outside of your control.

**However, there are other important risk factors that you CAN change.**

These include:

- Eating an unhealthy diet
- Being overweight
- Not getting enough exercise
- Smoking

## What can you do to reduce your cholesterol level?

Eating a heart healthy diet and regular exercise are the keys to lowering your cholesterol and protecting your heart.

