

Reduce Your Risk

Did you know a high cholesterol level increases your chance for heart disease or stroke?

In 2006, one out of every six deaths in the United States was related to heart disease. Also, nearly 3,500 heart attacks occurred every day in the U.S.!

One of the leading causes of heart attack and stroke is high cholesterol. Many heart attacks and strokes could be prevented by lowering cholesterol.

Many people don't know their cholesterol levels are high, and many others are not using the medication prescribed by their doctor to help lower their cholesterol.

PEHP would like to help

increase your knowledge about cholesterol. You will receive three editions of our *In the Know* newsletters about high cholesterol.

The newsletters will provide information about what your cholesterol goals should be, tips on how to remember to take your medication, how to talk to your doctor if you experience side effects, and how to lower your out-of-pocket costs for your cholesterol prescriptions.

We hope this information is useful in helping you reduce your risks for heart attack and stroke and will help you live a heart-healthy life.

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Don't Forget » Taking your medicine as your doctor instructs is vital.

Know the Facts

You can take steps to decrease your risk for high cholesterol

There are many risk factors for heart disease and stroke. They can be divided into two categories: things you can change and things you can't.



Risks you CAN'T control

» Gender and age

Men over age 45 and women over age 55 are at higher risk for heart disease.

» Family history of early heart disease

If a grandparent, parent or sibling has heart disease before age 65 you are at higher risk.

» Cholesterol

Keeping your cholesterol normal or low helps reduce your risk.

» Blood pressure

If your blood pressure is high, work with your doctor to lower it.

Risks you CAN control

» Smoking

Quitting smoking will lower your risk.

» Weight

Losing weight will not only help you feel better, it will also reduce problems with heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

» Diabetes

If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar controlled.

» Exercise

Exercise will not only help strengthen your heart, it will also help reduce many of the risks listed here.

Talk to your doctor about your risks and ask about your cholesterol level.

What is cholesterol and why does it matter?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in the walls of cells in all parts of the body.

The body uses cholesterol to make hormones, bile acids, and other substances.

It is normal to have cholesterol. In fact, cholesterol is essential to the function of all cells in your body.

However, too much cholesterol is a risk factor for heart attack, stroke, and other cardiovascular disease. When your body has too much cholesterol, it builds up on the walls of your arteries.

This may cause these arteries to harden and become more narrow over time. This

hardening and narrowing may decrease the amount of oxygen delivered to organs such as your heart, brain, and kidneys.

There are two ways your body obtains cholesterol. First, your body makes cholesterol. If given the right starting materials, your body can produce all the cholesterol it needs.

Second, you take in cholesterol in the food you eat. Foods such as meats, fish, milk, eggs, and cheese contain cholesterol.

Doctors have named the condition of too much cholesterol in the blood "hypercholesterolemia" or "hyperlipidemia."

What's Good and Bad?

It's important to know the difference between HDL, LDL

You may have heard terms such as "good cholesterol," "HDL," "bad cholesterol," or "LDL" while talking to friends or family.

These terms can be confusing. Your doctor will check your cholesterol by ordering a simple blood test. After drawing your blood, it is analyzed for the amount of cholesterol in it. This number is known as "Total Cholesterol."

Total cholesterol can be broken down. The term "Bad Cholesterol" refers to "LDL"

or Low Density Lipoprotein. This kind of cholesterol deposits on the inside of your arteries and veins. The lower your LDL the better.

The term "Good Cholesterol" refers to "HDL," which is High Density Lipoprotein. This kind of cholesterol is not deposited on arteries and veins. The higher your HDL the better.



Be aware » How good is your good cholesterol?

	Total Cholesterol	LDL	HDL
Bad	240 or more	160 or over	Under 40
Borderline	200-239	130-159	40-59
Good	Under 200	Under 130	60 or more

What about my medication?

It's important to take cholesterol medicine as prescribed by your doctor. Here are some tips to help you remember:

» **Take your medication at the same time each day.** Take it when you read the morning newspaper or when you walk the dog each day. Having a set routine helps you remember.

» **Set reminders.** Watches with alarms, cell phones that vibrate, notes on the refrigerator, and day planners can all help to keep you on track.

» **Enlist the aid of a family member or friend.** Sometimes, just a few weeks of friendly reminders can help you get into the habit of taking your medicine at the right time every day.

Make a routine of taking your medicine.



» **Write down questions before your doctor's appointment.** This will help you be sure your doctor can answer all of your questions and concerns.

What's Your Cholesterol IQ?

1. All of the following are risk factors you can control EXCEPT:

- a. High blood pressure
- b. Weight
- c. Cholesterol
- d. Age

2. HDL is also known as:

- a. "Bad" cholesterol
- b. "Good" cholesterol
- c. "Total" cholesterol
- d. None of the above

3. High cholesterol is a risk factor for heart attack and stroke?

- a. True
- b. False

4. Choose the best LDL cholesterol level:

- a. 160
- b. 140
- c. 120
- d. 199

5. Which of the following tips may help you to take your medication every day?

- a. Don't refill your medication because it doesn't make you feel any different.
- b. Set your prescription bottle by your toothbrush and toothpaste so it reminds you to take it every day.
- c. Don't talk to your doctor about any side effects you are experiencing from your medication.
- d. All of the above.

(Find the answers at the bottom left of this page.)

Mediterranean Kabobs

Watching your cholesterol? Here's a recipe for you

INGREDIENTS

For Marinade:

- » 2 tablespoons olive oil
- » 1 tablespoons minced garlic (2-3 cloves)
- » 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- » 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- » ½ teaspoon salt

For Kabobs:

- » 6oz top sirloin or other beef steak cubes (12 cubes)
- » 6oz boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into ¾ inch cubes (12 cubes)
- » 1 large white onion, cut into ¾ inch squares (12 pieces)
- » 12 cherry tomatoes
- » 1 red bell pepper, cut into ¾ inch squares (12 pieces)

- » 12 wooden or metal skewers, each 6 inches long (soak wood skewers in water for 10 minutes to prevent burning)

DIRECTIONS

- » Preheat grill pan or oven broiler (with rack 3 inches from heat source) on high temperature.
- » Combine ingredients for marinade, and divide between two bowls.
- » Mix beef, chicken, and vegetables in one bowl of marinade. Let stand for 10 minutes.
- » Place one piece of beef, chicken, tomato, onion, and red pepper on each of the 12 skewers (discard marinade).
- » Grill or broil on each of the four

sides for 2-3 minutes or until completely cooked. Spoon some of the remaining bowl of marinade over skewers while cooking.

- » Serve 3 skewers per serving. Drizzle remaining marinade on top of each serving (use only marinade that did not touch raw beef or chicken).

Nutritional Analysis

- » Calories..... 202
- » Total fat 11g
- » Saturated fat..... 2g
- » Cholesterol.....40mg
- » Sodium 333mg
- » Total fiber 2g
- » Protein 18g
- » Carbohydrates 9g
- » Potassium.....43mg

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