



All About Cholesterol

The Basics

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that is used to build cells. It comes from two sources: the liver which actually makes all we need, and animal sources like meat and dairy products. If there's too much circulating it can build up in our blood vessels. If a blood clot forms and narrows the artery or ruptures, it can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

High cholesterol doesn't typically have any symptoms. A fasting blood draw should be done at least every 4-6 years, though more frequent checks may be needed based on medical history.

Risk factors include smoking, unhealthy diet, excess weight, physical inactivity, family history and other chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes.

Understanding Your Score

LDL, or the "bad" cholesterol contributes to build up of plaque in the artery walls. Animal sources like meat, eggs and dairy are the main source. They also contain saturated fat, which can trigger the liver to produce more cholesterol. Some tropical oils including palm, palm kernel and coconut oils, also contain saturated fat.

HDL, or the "good" cholesterol helps remove build up from artery walls and recirculates it back to the liver where it can be processed. The best way to increase HDL is through physical activity. Dietary sources that may increase HDL include foods high in omega 3 fatty acids such as fatty fish like tuna and salmon, walnuts, chia seeds and flax seeds.

Triglycerides (TGs) store excess fat from the diet. Along with high LDL and low HDL, high triglycerides are linked to fatty build up in the arteries, increasing the risk of a heart attack or stroke. Factors that influence high triglycerides include family history, large portion sizes, refined carbohydrates and added sugars.



Source: heart.org

Contact your onsite Health Coach for more information:

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