

# Understanding High Blood Cholesterol

You may have been told you have high blood cholesterol. Knowing more about cholesterol will help you manage it.

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that's made by your body. It is also in some foods.

Cholesterol moves through your blood vessels on molecules called "lipoproteins." One type of lipoprotein is called low-density lipoprotein, or LDL.

LDL cholesterol can cling to the blood vessel walls anywhere in your body, causing a build-up of plaque. This build-up is called atherosclerosis.

As plaque builds up, the blood vessels narrow, blocking blood flow to and from the heart.

These changes can occur without you knowing... until it causes problems.

Atherosclerosis raises your risk for: heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, peripheral artery disease, chronic kidney disease, and other health issues.

But not all cholesterol is bad. Another type of lipoprotein called high-density lipoprotein, or HDL, is good for our bodies. It doesn't stick to blood vessels. And it can help reduce the amount of LDL cholesterol in your body.

You can remember HDL is good for you because it makes your body happy.

The only way to know your cholesterol levels is to get a blood test. Then, you and your healthcare provider can set a healthy cholesterol goal and make a plan to get you there.