

Cholesterol Numbers: What They Mean for Your Health

Have you ever gotten your cholesterol results back and wondered what the numbers really mean for your health?

Well ... it depends.

Meet Yolanda and Gabriel. They have the same cholesterol numbers.

But what those numbers mean for their overall health ...and for their risk of having a heart attack or stroke ... It may surprise you.

When I saw my numbers, I thought they were high ...and I got really worried.

I thought I was gonna have to start taking medicines for the rest of my life.

My numbers have been kind of high before ...but I've never had to do anything to bring them down.

But I'm older ... and well, not as healthy as I used to be ...and now my numbers are higher.

I wasn't sure what that meant for me.

I was surprised and relieved when my doctor said I might not need to take medicines.

He said we need to look at my overall health to figure that out.

He asked me a lot of questions, like ... do I have diabetes or do I smoke.

I said, 'no.' Then we talked about how my risk for having a heart attack was low, even though my cholesterol is a little high.

When I understood how the numbers fit into the bigger picture ...and with my doctor's advice ... I realized I didn't need medicine.

We also talked about how I'm not as healthy as I could be.

So I'm trying to eat more healthy foods and lose some weight.

My doctor went over my numbers with me and we looked at my risk.

My risk was pretty high.

He showed me that there are a few things that can help determine my risk.

That it's not just about my cholesterol.

Other things ... like my blood pressure ... put me at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

And ... just being older and being a man ups my risk.

I can't change my age or that I'm a man ...but I can do things to keep my heart healthy.

I'm going to try to live healthier and exercise more.

My doctor said doing these things and taking medicines can help.

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Cholesterol is just one part of your health.

And what certain numbers mean for you may be different than for someone else.

Your doctor can help you figure out how your numbers fit into your overall risk.