

# Know Your Numbers

## Cholesterol

*The body produces two types of cholesterol: HDL, known as good cholesterol because it protects against dangerous blockages in the arteries that can lead to heart disease; and LDL, known as bad cholesterol because it is more likely to clog arteries and produce heart disease.*

A healthy total cholesterol level is a reading of less than 200 mg/dl. Total cholesterol is a combination of LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides (another form of fat in your body). The goal is to have your LDL levels less than 100, HDL levels greater than 40, and triglycerides less than 150.

### To improve your cholesterol levels:

- Reduce intake of saturated fats and increase intake of fruits, vegetables, fish and fiber
- Try more complex carbohydrates, such as whole wheat pasta, brown rice and whole wheat breads
- Use healthier oils like olive, canola, flax and Enova in cooking and salad dressings
- Avoid prepackaged foods, which are often loaded with unhealthy carbohydrates and fats
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Increase physical activity to at least 30 minutes at a moderate level, five days a week

Knowing your health numbers will help you and your doctor understand your health and what you can do to either stay healthy or get healthy. Whether you use the numbers to learn more about your health via a health assessment or just track them with your doctor, learning them and understanding them is the first step to better health.

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