



February is Heart Month...



You Can have a Healthy Heart!

Better lifestyle habits can help you reduce your risk for a heart attack

Your diet, weight, physical activity, blood pressure and exposure to tobacco smoke all affect your heart health and too much cholesterol in the blood can lead to cardiovascular disease — America's No. 1 killer. The good news is you can lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. Whether you've been prescribed medication or advised to make diet and lifestyle changes to help manage your cholesterol, carefully follow your doctor's recommendations.

Eat a heart healthy diet and enjoy regular physical activity - You are what you eat!

A healthful eating plan means choosing the right foods to eat and preparing foods in a healthy way. A Heart Healthy Diet contains plenty of whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables and limited amounts of saturated fats and sodium. For a guideline to healthy eating check out: www.mypyramid.gov and resources listed on www.americanheart.org or call the American Heart Association at 1-800-242-8271.

Know your numbers! LDL (bad) cholesterol circulates in the blood and can slowly build up in the inner walls of the arteries that feed the heart and brain. Together with other substances, it can form plaque, a thick, hard deposit that can narrow the arteries and make them less flexible. This condition is known as [atherosclerosis](#). If a clot forms and blocks a narrowed artery, heart attack or stroke can result. What should your number be? This depends on many factors but in general, the higher your number is over 100mg/dL, the **higher your risk!**

HDL (good) cholesterol is known as "good" cholesterol, because high levels of HDL seem to protect against heart attack. Low levels of HDL (less than 40 mg/dL) also increase the risk of heart disease. Medical experts think that HDL tends to carry cholesterol away from the arteries and back to the liver, where it's passed from the body. Some experts believe that HDL removes excess cholesterol from arterial plaque, slowing its buildup. Your HDL levels should be over 40mg/dl. The higher this number, **the lower your risk!**

Triglycerides are a form of fat made in the body. Elevated triglycerides can be due to overweight/obesity, physical inactivity, cigarette smoking, excess alcohol consumption and a diet very high in carbohydrates (60 percent of total calories or more). People with high triglycerides often have a high total cholesterol level, including a high LDL (bad) level and a low HDL (good) level. Many people with heart disease and/or diabetes also have high triglyceride levels. Ideally triglycerides levels should be **lower** than 150mg/dL.

For more information please contact:

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February 2010