

Look what you can do for your heart at www.sistertosister.org

- Learn the facts about heart disease
- Locate a nearby screening center
- Assess your personal level of risk
- Build a customized action plan
- Track your heart health progress
- Ask experts for advice
- Give and get community support
- Discover daily heart health tips...and more!



Sister to Sister: The Women's Heart Health Foundation, a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is dedicated to preventing heart disease in women by:

- Offering women free cardiac screenings to promote early detection and treatment of heart disease and its risk factors.
- Increasing awareness that heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States.
- Helping women make healthy lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of heart disease.

SISTER TO SISTER

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Managing Your Cholesterol



YOU HAVE THE POWER TO HAVE A HEALTHY HEART



SISTER TO SISTER
The Women's Heart Health Foundation

The Cholesterol/Heart Health Connection

Cholesterol is a fatlike substance that travels through your blood and helps to form cell membranes and some hormones. Your body makes all the cholesterol you need, but you also get cholesterol from some foods you eat, like meat and dairy products. If you have too much cholesterol, it can stick to the walls of your arteries, keeping your blood from flowing freely. When this happens, the buildup is called plaque, and it can be a dangerous problem.

Millions of women have high blood cholesterol. Fortunately, it's a risk factor you can control.

A simple blood test is all it takes to find out if you have high cholesterol. It will reveal: your total cholesterol; your high-density lipoprotein (HDL), which helps prevent cholesterol from building up in your arteries; your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), which leads to cholesterol buildup; and your level of triglycerides, another fatty substance in the blood. Here's how to decode your numbers:

	Ideal	Borderline High Risk	High Risk
Total Cholesterol (Lower is Better)	Below 200 mg/dL	201-239 mg/dL	240 mg/dL or greater
LDL – “Bad Cholesterol” (Lower is Better)	Below 100 mg/dL	131-159 mg/dL	160 mg/dL or greater
HDL – “Good Cholesterol” (Higher is Better)	60 mg/dL or greater	40-59 mg/dL	Less than 40 mg/dL
Triglycerides (Lower is better)	Below 150 mg/dL		150 mg/dL or greater

*Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliters (dL) of blood.

Just Between Us...



Before Your Cholesterol is Tested

- Know your family health history and review it with your doctor. Your genes may influence how fast LDL (“bad”) cholesterol is made and removed from your blood.
- Do not eat or drink anything for 9 to 12 hours before the test. In particular, avoid coffee, tea, and soda.
- If you're told to stop taking certain drugs that can affect the test, first check with your doctor.

YES YOU CAN MANAGE YOUR CHOLESTEROL

10 Heart Healthy Changes

1. Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains. They do not contain saturated or trans fats, which cause your body to make more cholesterol.
2. When you eat packaged foods, read the labels to choose options that are fat free or low in saturated or trans fats.
3. Watch your fats when you eat out. Ask the server if your meal can be prepared with vegetable oils (examples are canola, olive, corn, soy) or soft margarine instead of butter.
4. Try eating more meatless meals, such as veggie lasagna or a grilled Portobello mushroom sandwich.
5. Lose weight if you are overweight. Extra weight increases your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol level. Losing even small amounts of weight can make a difference.
6. Exercise. An inactive lifestyle also tends to raise your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol level. Start small, such as taking a 15-minute walk several times each week.
7. De-stress. Research shows that long-term stress may raise blood cholesterol levels. This is especially true for people who deal with stress by eating fatty foods. Exercising, getting enough sleep, and taking time for yourself are just some of the ways to reduce stress.
8. Limit alcohol consumption. Drinking too much alcohol can raise triglyceride levels, lead to high blood pressure, and damage the liver and heart muscle.
9. If you smoke, quit. Smoking has been shown to lower HDL (good) cholesterol levels. It also lowers your tolerance for physical activity, so it's harder to get the activity you need to help you reach healthy cholesterol levels.
10. Manage your medications. If you take medications, including over-the-counter drugs, be sure to take them as directed.

GET MORE TIPS AT SISTERTOSISTER.ORG