



September 2013

Fort HealthCare

## Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a vital part of our body, and is located in every cell within us. The majority of cholesterol in our body is produced in the liver, but some comes from the foods that we eat. There are two types of cholesterol:

- HDL or "Good" cholesterol, which is responsible for keeping the bad cholesterol from sticking in our artery walls
- LDL or "Bad" cholesterol, which can increase the risk of heart attack, heart disease or stroke if too much lines the walls of our arteries

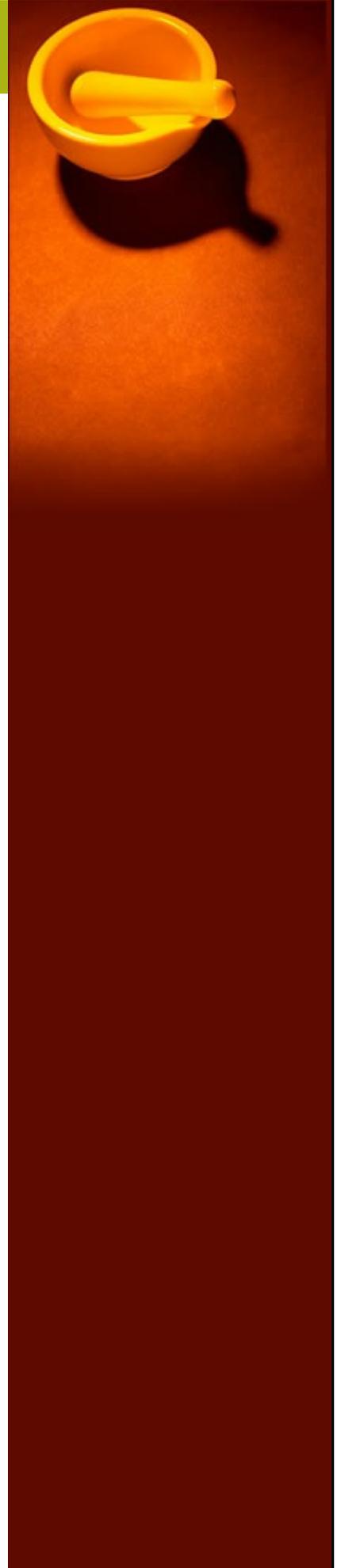
Cholesterol screenings measure your total cholesterol, triglycerides, and the levels of both HDL's and LDL's

### Why the numbers matter?

We need some cholesterol within our body for normal bodily processes. It becomes a problem when our total cholesterol or bad (LDL) cholesterol is too high, or our good (HDL) is too low. When we have too much bad cholesterol, it begins to stick to the walls of our arteries and causes them to become narrow and harden. When our arteries start to narrow, the blood flow decreases to our heart and brain and other health risks rise.

### What are health risks with high cholesterol?

Very rarely are symptoms associated with high cholesterol. As cholesterol numbers increase, so does the risk for heart attacks, heart disease, and stroke. All of these health risks are associated with lack of blood flow and/or a clot that becomes lodged within an artery. As the arteries become more narrow and hardened from plaque buildup caused by cholesterol, the risks increase substantially. A simple blood test will determine the levels of cholesterol within your body.



## What should my numbers be?

Your healthcare provider will go over your blood test results with you, and will discuss the guidelines that you should maintain. The chart to the right will give you an idea of what your numbers should be, and the risks associated if the numbers are elevated.

Screening	Target
Cholesterol (total)	↓ 200 - Desirable 200 - 239 - Borderline ↑ 240 or above - High Risk
HDL	↑ 60 or above - Low Risk of Heart Disease 40 - 60 - Near Optimal ↓ 40 or below - High Risk of Heart Disease
LDL	↓ 100 or below - Low Risk of Heart Disease
Triglycerides	↓ 150 or below - Low Risk of Heart Disease

## How can I help my numbers?

Your healthcare provider will give you suggestions of the best way to improve cholesterol numbers. Sometimes this includes medication therapy, lifestyle changes or both. Lifestyle changes can assist in prevention of increasing cholesterol numbers. These include:

- Maintaining a heart-healthy diet
- Engaging in physical activity (20-30 min/day for most days of the week)
- Smoking cessation
- Watching food labels for excess cholesterol

For screening information contact Fort HealthCare at (920) 568-5000 or visit our website at <http://www.forthhealth.com>



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