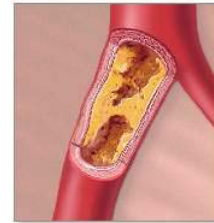


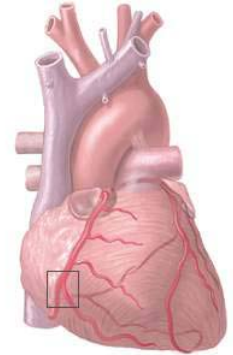
What You Need to Know About Cholesterol

What is cholesterol?

- Cholesterol is a waxy substance. It is produced by the liver. It is also in certain foods such as meat, eggs, dairy products and cheese. Your body needs some cholesterol, but the liver makes all that the body needs. When there is too much cholesterol in the body, it builds up in the arteries. This causes “hardening of the arteries” and can cause a narrowing. The narrowing causes a decrease in blood flow. If an artery in the heart becomes too narrow, it can result in a heart attack. If an artery in the brain becomes too narrow, it can result in a stroke.



Blockage in right coronary artery



Types of cholesterol.

- There are two types of cholesterol. Low-density or LDL is known as the “bad” cholesterol. High levels of LDL can lead to heart disease. High-density or HDL is known as the “good” cholesterol. HDL gives some protection against heart disease.

What makes high levels of cholesterol?

- Your cholesterol level is determined by a number of factors.
- What you can't change –
 - Your family history.
 - Your age.
 - Before the age of 50, men's cholesterol levels tend to be higher than women's.
- What we can change-
 - Being sedentary (not getting enough physical activity). Being active can help to lower cholesterol. Being active also helps to increase the levels of “good” cholesterol.
 - Eating foods high in saturated fat, which can increase

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cholesterol levels.

- Being overweight or obese, which is linked to higher cholesterol levels and higher levels of the “bad” cholesterol.

What can you do?

- Have your cholesterol level checked. Most people with high cholesterol do not have any symptoms. Talk with your provider about when and how often you should have your cholesterol level checked.

- Eat a diet low in saturated fat. Choose lean cuts of meat or fish. Eat turkey or chicken without the skin. Choose low-fat cheeses, milk products and dairy products. Avoid foods that are fried.



- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Be physically active. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. If you’ve not been active, talk with your provider before you start. Remember to start slowly.



Maintain a healthy weight.

- Being overweight or obese can increase your cholesterol levels. Losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight can help to decrease your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol level and increase your HDL (“good”) cholesterol. Talk to your health care team about the *MOVE!* Weight Management Program for Veterans. *MOVE!* can help you lose weight and keep it off.