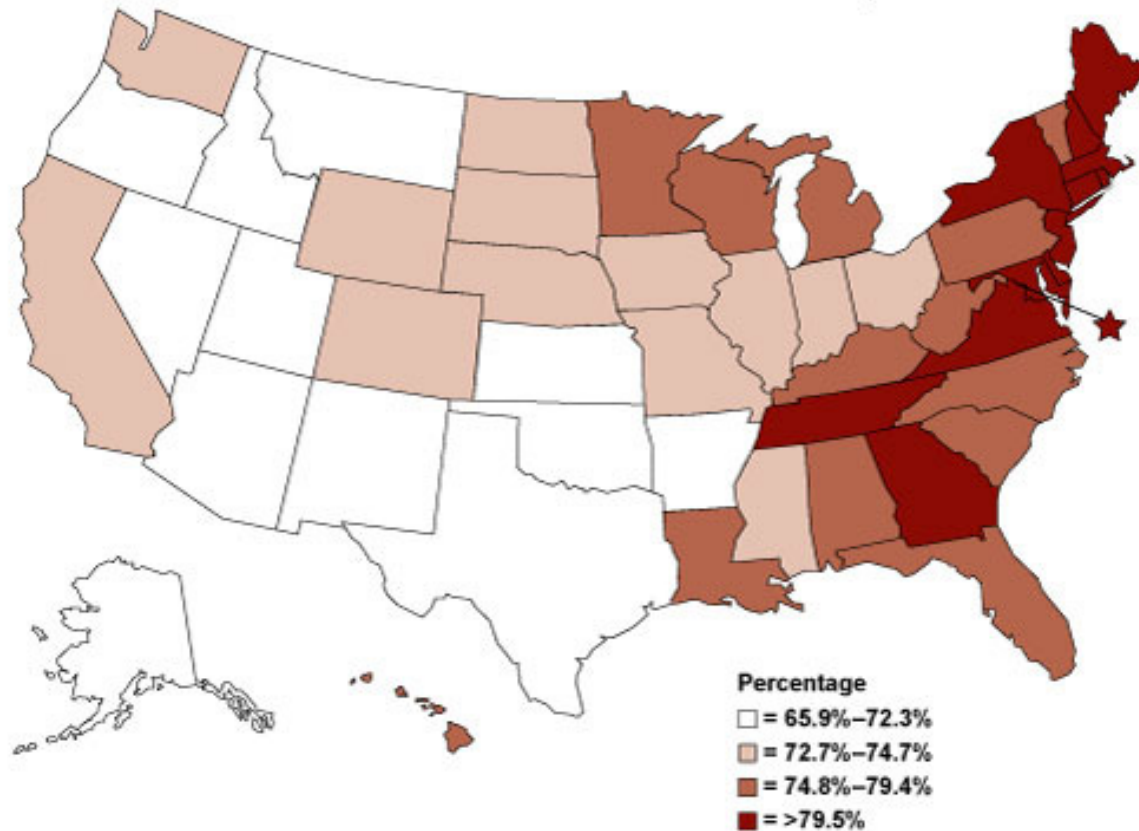




## Cholesterol Fact Sheet



# Percentage of Adults Aged 20 Years and Older Who Had Their Cholesterol Checked Within the Past 5 Years, 2007



Age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.

Source: CDC, National Vital Statistics System.

<b>65.9%–72.3%:</b> Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah	<b>74.8%–79.4%:</b> Alabama, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin
<b>72.7%–74.7%:</b> California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Washington, Wyoming	<b>&gt;79.5%:</b> Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia

## Cholesterol Facts

- Having high blood cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.
- Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. But, when you have too much in your blood, it can build up on the walls of your arteries. This can lead to heart disease and stroke.
- Approximately one in every six adults—16.3% of the U.S. adult population—has high cholesterol. The level defined as high total cholesterol is 240 mg/dL and above. People with high cholesterol have approximately twice the risk for heart disease as people with lower levels.
- If you have heart disease, lowering your cholesterol can reduce your risk for having a heart attack, needing heart bypass surgery or angioplasty, and dying from heart disease. Even if you do not have heart disease, you can reduce your risk of developing it by lowering your cholesterol. This is true even if you have normal cholesterol levels.
- There are steps you can take to prevent high cholesterol or to reduce your levels. These actions include exercising, eating a healthy diet, and not smoking.
- High cholesterol does not have symptoms. As a result, many people do not know that their cholesterol is too high. Doctors can do a simple blood test to check your levels. The [National Cholesterol Education Program](#) recommends that adults get their cholesterol checked every five years.

Desirable Cholesterol Levels	
Total cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL ("bad" cholesterol)	Less than 100 mg/dL*
HDL ("good" cholesterol)	60 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL

\*Optimal for people at risk for heart disease.

## **CDC's Public Health Efforts**

Since 1998, CDC has funded state health departments' efforts to reduce the number of people with heart disease or stroke. Health departments in 41 states and the District of Columbia currently receive funding. The program stresses policy and education to promote heart-healthy and stroke-free living and working conditions. For more information on CDC's National Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, visit [http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/state\\_program/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/state_program/index.htm).

## **For More Information**

For more information about cholesterol, visit the following Web sites:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [American Heart Association](#)\*
- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)
- [Third Report of the Expert Panel on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults \(Adult Treatment Panel III\)](#)

To learn more about Americans' cholesterol levels, see [Health, United States](#), an annual report from CDC.

\*\*Links to non-Federal organizations are provided solely as a service to our users. Links do not constitute an endorsement of any organization by CDC or the Federal Government, and none should be inferred. The CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at this link.