

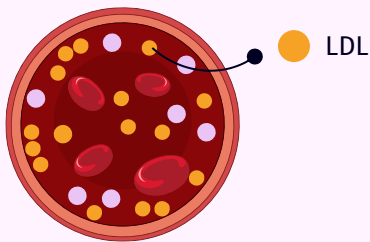
# Numbers Don't Lie

## Cholesterol Edition

### What is Cholesterol?

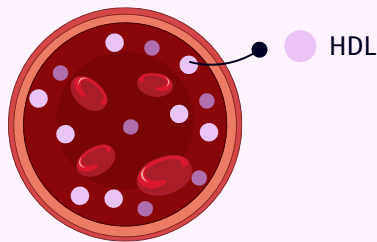
High cholesterol is super common, and a lot of folks don't even know they have it. **Cholesterol and triglycerides are fats that move through your blood.** Your body needs some of them to function—but when the levels get too high, they can mess with your heart and blood vessels. This guide breaks down what each number means, why it matters, when to get tested, and how to keep track of everything.

### What Are the Levels? (LDL, HDL, and Triglycerides)



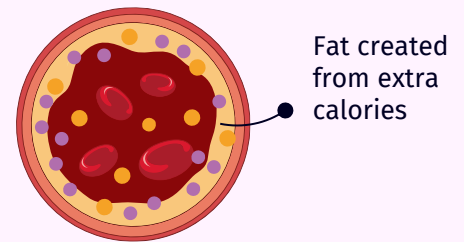
#### LDL: The “Bad” Cholesterol

LDL stands for Low-Density Lipoprotein. This is that “bad” cholesterol people talk about because it sticks to your blood vessels like gunk in a drain. When there's too much of it, it builds up on your artery walls and turns into plaque. Over time, that buildup makes it harder for blood to move through your body—and blocked blood flow can lead to a heart attack or stroke. That's why keeping your LDL low is major.



#### HDL: The “Good” Cholesterol

HDL stands for High-Density Lipoprotein. Think of HDL as the cleanup crew. It picks up extra cholesterol—including LDL—and carries it back to your liver to get cleared out. Higher HDL numbers mean your heart has more protection. So if your HDL is high, that's a good thing.



#### Triglycerides

Triglycerides are another kind of fat in your blood. Your body creates them from extra calories you don't burn right away. High triglycerides raise your risk of heart disease, especially when they're paired with high LDL or low HDL. Together, they can make plaque form even faster—which means a higher chance of heart attack or stroke.

### Healthy Ranges (Aim for these numbers)

**LDL:** <100 mg/dL

**Triglycerides:** <150 mg/dL

**Total Cholesterol:** <200 mg/dL

**HDL:** >40 mg/dL (Men) | >50 mg/dL (Women) *(60+ is even better)*

## Why Your Numbers Matter?

Cholesterol is sneaky — you can't feel it going up or down. It just moves through your bloodstream silently. When LDL or triglycerides stay high for a long time, they start damaging your blood vessels. That damage creates plaque, which narrows the space inside your arteries. Narrow vessels = less blood getting where it needs to go.

**If you have diabetes, your risk is even higher** because diabetes can raise your bad cholesterol and lower your good cholesterol. Many people with diabetes develop heart disease earlier than expected.

Knowing your numbers early helps you catch problems before they start — and gives you and your doctor a plan to protect your heart.

## When to Get Tested?

A cholesterol test (a lipid panel) is just a simple blood test. Sometimes you might have to fast — your doctor will let you know.

Age	How often to test
20-39	At least once every 5 years
45-65 (Men)	Every 1-2 Years
55-65 (Women)	Every 1-2 Years
65+	Every Year

If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, you smoke, or heart disease runs in your family, you might need to test more often.

## High Cholesterol can lead to...



**Heart attacks**  
Blood blocked from the heart



**Strokes**  
Blood blocked from the brain



**Poor Circulation**  
In your legs and feet

## Questions to ask your doctor?

- ? What are my LDL, HDL, and triglyceride numbers?
- ? What should my goals be?
- ? Do I need medicine to help lower my cholesterol?
- ? What changes with food or exercise can help me?
- ? When should I test again?

### Lift Every Voice Pro Tip

## Bring a Notebook or a Health App

One of the easiest ways to stay on top of your health is to write things down. Bring a small notebook to your appointments or use a phone app. Track your LDL, HDL, and triglyceride levels every time you get tested. You can also jot down your blood pressure, blood sugar, medicines, and anything new you're feeling.

Keeping notes helps you remember what your doctor said, notice changes over time, and ask better questions.

## Stay Ready So You Don't Have to Get Ready

Understanding your cholesterol numbers puts you in control. Small steps — eating healthier, moving your body more, and taking your medicine as directed — can make a big difference. Your health matters, and knowing your numbers is a powerful way to protect your heart and stay on track.

Your LDL, HDL, and triglyceride numbers



Your blood pressure and blood sugar



Any new symptoms



Questions you want to ask



Your medicines and doses

