

THE FAMILY VAN

We are Family

HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL

(Hypercholesterolemia)

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a kind of fat (lipid) in your blood. Naturally found in the body, cholesterol has many important roles. Our body uses it to make protective outer coverings for cells, and hormones. Cholesterol can come **from two sources: the food you eat, and your own body**, which produces some cholesterol.

The “good” cholesterol (HDL) helps protect your heart, but “bad” (LDL) (“bad” cholesterol) can clog the arteries of your heart. There is another type of fat in our body called triglycerides.

What are the Risks from having High Cholesterol?

Your blood cholesterol level has a lot to do with your chances of getting heart disease. High blood cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for **heart disease**. A risk factor is a condition that increases your chance of getting a disease. In fact, the higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk for developing heart disease or having a heart attack. Heart disease is the number one killer of women and men in the United States. Each year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about a half million people die from heart disease.



Where do we Get High Cholesterol From?

Cholesterol can come from **two sources: the food you eat, and your own body**, which produces some cholesterol. A variety of things can affect cholesterol levels.

How much Cholesterol is considered normal?

According to recommendations in the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP), you should try to keep your total cholesterol below 200; ‘bad’ cholesterol (LDL) less than 100 mg/dL, and your ‘good’ (HDL) cholesterol greater or equal to 40 mg/dL.

Total Cholesterol Level	Category
Less than 200	Desirable
200-239	Borderline High
240 and above	High

* Cholesterol measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.

Can I Get My Cholesterol Checked on The Family Van?

Yes !!!

Are there any risks from this test?

No. Since the kind of test we do on the Family Van **does NOT require to draw blood** from the veins in your arm and instead only takes a tiny drop from your finger tip, these blood tests are

very safe. Our staff use great safety precautions during these tests such as wear fresh latex gloves and use a new, single-use needle for each procedure. **If you have bleeding disorders or take medication that reduces ability of your blood to clot, please inform our staff before the test.**

What happens during the test?

A **tiny drop of blood is collected from your finger-tip.** Your finger tip area is disinfected using alcohol swabs and with a sterile, single use very fine needle a we stick your finger tip to collect a tiny drop of blood. We will then disinfect the area and apply a small bandage. **You do NOT have to be fasting for this Cholesterol Test.** While it may be helpful for other type of cholesterol tests, it is not required at the Family Van. **You get the results in about 5 minutes.**

What Can I do to Lower my Cholesterol Levels?

1. If your cholesterol levels are very high, your doctor may give you **medicines.** There are other things YOU can do to lower your cholesterol levels including diet, exercise, and other factors.
2. **These are things you CAN do something about** to keep your cholesterol levels normal:
 - **Diet.** Avoid Saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol in the food you eat (see list below).
 - **Weight.** Being overweight is a risk factor for heart disease. It also tends to increase your cholesterol. Losing weight can help lower your ‘bad’ cholesterol (LDL) and total cholesterol levels, as well as raise your ‘good’ (HDL) cholesterol levels.
 - **Physical Activity.** Not being physically active is a risk factor for heart disease. Regular physical activity can help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels. It also helps you lose weight. Try to be physically active for 30 minutes most days

Things you can NOT do anything about also can affect cholesterol levels. These include:

- **Age and Gender.** As women and men get older, their cholesterol levels rise. Women’s cholesterol levels may also change before and after menopause.
- **Heredity.** High blood cholesterol can run in families.

Food And Cholesterol

Talk to Family Van nutritionist and staff to know about low cholesterol food; here’s a brief list



< Low Cholesterol Food:
Low to no saturated or trans fat; low-fat dairy products, lean meats, fish, skinless poultry; whole grain foods; fruits and vegetables; good sources of soluble fiber such as oats, certain fruits (e.g. oranges, pears) vegetables (e.g. Brussels, sprouts, carrots), dried peas and beans.

High Cholesterol Food: >
Limit Saturated and trans fat; limit high cholesterol foods mainly found in animal products e.g. egg yolks, meat, poultry, fish and higher fat milk products, butter, lard, margarine, mayo; trans fats, some vegetable oils; almost all fried and junk food.



How Often Should I Get My Cholesterol Checked?

Your age, health, cholesterol levels, and risk of having cardiovascular disease will determine how frequently your need this test. Usually young, healthy people are only tested once every few years. As you get older you may need to have it checked annually. If you are trying to lower your cholesterol through diet, medication or exercise, you can get it checked quarterly on Family Van. Cholesterol does NOT need to be checked on a daily or weekly basis.

YOU can control your Cholesterol!

An estimated 25% of Americans have cholesterol levels high enough for risk of heart attack!

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