American Heart Association.

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Life's Essential 8 *for Menopause*

Learn Your Levels

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that comes from two sources: food and your body. It is found only in foods from animal sources. It travels in the body by lipoproteins (LDL and HDL). Cholesterol levels can naturally change during perimenopause and menopause due to declining estrogen levels altering how the liver processes and clears lipids. A high LDL cholesterol level can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke. It's important to understand your cholesterol levels and in addition to lifestyle changes, medication may be recommended by a healthcare professional.



HDL = GOOD: High-density lipoprotein is known as "good" cholesterol. It helps keep LDL from sticking to artery walls and reduces plaque buildup. This process can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

LDL = BAD: Low-density lipoprotein is known as "bad" cholesterol.

Where to Start

A healthcare professional can check your cholesterol with a simple blood test and explain what it means for your health and work with you on how to keep your levels in a healthy range.

What to Enjoy More of

- Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, and lean proteins like fish and seafood.
- Move more. Physical activity can help lower your bad cholesterol and reduce stress.
- Maintain your meds. You may be prescribed cholesterol-lowering medications. Follow the instructions when taking these and alert your healthcare professional if you experience any side effects.

What to do Less

- Limit the amount of saturated fats you eat. Replace saturated fats like butter and whole dairy products with healthy fats including olive oil, fatty fish, nuts and eggs.
- Stop smoking or vaping. Smoking lowers good HDL cholesterol. It also increases your risk of heart disease and affects your brain health.



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