

# Knowing your cholesterol levels can help you maintain a healthy heart.

Cholesterol is a type of fat your body needs to function. However, too much cholesterol in your blood is bad for your heart and blood vessels. Cholesterol levels can be checked with a simple blood test.

## Speak to your healthcare provider about having a cholesterol blood test.

- If you are **over 40**, you should start to have your cholesterol checked.
- You may need a cholesterol test if you are **under 40** and are at increased risk of high cholesterol.  
For example:
  - You have a health condition such as diabetes, kidney disease, or hypertension.
  - You have a close relative with high cholesterol, heart disease, or a history of stroke.
- Adults should have a **Lipoprotein(a) test ONCE** in their lifetime, preferably with their first cholesterol test.

## Know your cholesterol levels and what they mean for your health.

- Cholesterol blood tests measure:
  - **Total cholesterol (TC)** - the total amount of cholesterol in your blood.
  - **Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C)** - often called “bad” cholesterol because it can cause fatty buildup in your blood vessels.
  - **High-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C)** - often called “good” cholesterol because it may protect you from a heart attack or stroke.
  - **Non-high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (non-HDL-C)** - all the cholesterol minus HDL-C.
  - **Triglycerides (TG)** - a type of fat that circulates in your blood and can raise your risk for heart disease and stroke.
- A **Lipoprotein(a) or Lp(a) test** measures a protein in your blood that carries cholesterol. Genetics help determine the level of this protein.

Record your cholesterol test results here:

Date	TC	LDL-C	HDL-C	Non-HDL-C	TG

My **Lp(a)** level on \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_.

## Discuss your test results with your healthcare provider and take steps to reduce your cholesterol if it's high.

Your healthcare provider will:

- Use your cholesterol levels to estimate your risk of developing heart problems in the future.
- Discuss ways you can prevent heart disease and stroke through lifestyle changes and medications.

The [2021 CCS Guidelines for the Management of Dyslipidemia for the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Adults](#) informs this resource.

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