

## WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body and in many foods. Your body needs it to work properly. However, excess cholesterol can build up in your arteries and over time, will narrow your arteries allowing less blood to pass through. Although cholesterol is important and necessary, too much cholesterol in the blood can be serious. People with high cholesterol are at risk of getting heart disease.

High cholesterol usually has no signs or symptoms. As a result, many people do not know they have high cholesterol and are therefore at risk. A simple blood test can tell you your level.

## WHAT SHOULD MY CHOLESTEROL BE?

Particles called lipoproteins carry cholesterol in the blood. There are two kinds you need to know about:

- ✚ **Low-density lipoproteins (LDL)** – Make up the majority of the body’s cholesterol. LDL is known as “bad” cholesterol. Having high levels can lead to a buildup of plaque in the arteries, resulting in heart disease and stroke.
- ✚ **High-density lipoproteins (HDL)** – Known as “good” cholesterol because it helps return cholesterol to the liver, which flushes it from the body. High levels of HDL help reduce the risk of heart disease.

Total cholesterol is based on your LDL and HDL counts. Generally, a lower cholesterol level is better. The guidelines below give you an idea of where your total cholesterol level should be.

Classification	Total Cholesterol
<b>Desirable</b>	Less than 200mg/dL
<b>Borderline High</b>	200-239 mg/dL
<b>High</b>	240mg/dL or higher

The National Cholesterol Education Program guidelines recommend that all adults over age 20 have a cholesterol test at least once every five (5) years.

## MANAGING YOUR CHOLESTEROL

***Living a healthy lifestyle may help lower cholesterol. People at any age can take steps to keep cholesterol levels normal.***

- ✓ ***Eat a Healthy Diet*** – eating a diet that is low in saturated fat and trans fats. Choose lean red meats, fish and chicken. Eat whole grains, low-fat cheeses, and plenty of fruits and vegetables. When eating pre-packaged foods – read the label. Cholesterol from food should be less than 200mg per day.
- ✓ ***Exercise Regularly*** – exercise is an important part of any plan to lower cholesterol; physical activity can also help you maintain a healthy weight. Just 30 minutes on most days is all it takes.
- ✓ ***Don’t Smoke*** – smoking injures blood vessels and speeds up the hardening of the arteries.
- ✓ ***Avoid Stress*** – people who are under stress eat more junk food, drink more, smoke more, and avoid exercise more, all of which can increase cholesterol.
- ✓ ***Already Diagnosed with High Cholesterol*** – in addition to the above recommendations take the medicines your doctor prescribed.

Follow your treatment plan, including exercise and diet, and take your medication as directed.

## WHO IS RX OUTREACH?

Rx Outreach is a non-profit organization that provides affordable medications to people in need. Through the Rx Outreach Program, low-income, uninsured patients have access to over 650 prescription medication strengths through our mail order pharmacy. Rx Outreach serves individuals and families whose income is 300% or less of the federal poverty level. Each year we serve over 80,000 people across all fifty states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

### **CHOLESTEROL MEDICATIONS AVAILABLE ON RX OUTREACH**

Atorvastatin – Simvastatin - Pravastatin  
Lovastatin - Gemfibrozil