

Is Your Cholesterol a Problem?

New guidelines offer specific recommendations to treat and prevent high cholesterol. Working with your health care provider is the only sure way to know whether you need treatment, but here are general recommendations:

- **Focus on lifestyle.** Healthy eating and physical activity are proven to lower LDL cholesterol (the “bad” kind).
- **Be alert early.** Take a “lifespan” approach to lower heart disease risk, stroke and other major problems. If there’s a family history, it’s reasonable to test kids as young as 2.
- **Keep monitoring.** People over 20 who don’t have cardiovascular disease should have a risk assessment every 4-6 years.
- **Monitor some more.** People between 40-75 are the most likely to need medicine. Among the many factors that could further increase risk:
 - o family history of heart disease or stroke
 - o high triglycerides
 - o metabolic syndrome
 - o chronic kidney disease
 - o chronic inflammatory conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis or HIV
 - o history of pre-eclampsia or early menopause
 - o ethnicity
- **Your genetics matter.** Talk to your doctor. Some populations are more prone to certain medical conditions and could have racial and/or ethnic features that could influence risk. Tools used for risk assessment are not always able to provide accurate information about all populations or individuals.

Source: American Heart Association

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