

# THINGS PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LIPIDS (CHOLESTEROL)

**L**ipids (cholesterol) are fatty substances in the blood. Lipids can build up inside arteries and lead to heart attack, stroke, or other forms of heart disease. There are several types of lipids that affect health.

Ideal lipid levels and the need for treatment to control lipids depend on whether a person has diabetes, high blood pressure, tobacco use, family history of heart disease, or other factors that make them high risk for heart attack and stroke. Discuss your lipid levels with your doctor.

## Lipids and Their Role in Health

<i>Lipid Type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Normal and Abnormal Levels, mg/dL</i>
<b>LDL</b> (low-density lipoprotein cholesterol)	"Bad" cholesterol: High levels increase buildup of lipids and blockages in arteries	Below 100 (very good) 100–129 (OK) 130–159 (borderline bad) 160–189 (bad) 190 or above (very bad)
<b>HDL</b> (high-density lipoprotein cholesterol)	"Good" cholesterol: High levels protect arteries from buildup of lipids and blockages in arteries	Below 40 (bad) 40–60 (OK) 60 or above (good)
<b>Total cholesterol</b>	Combination of different types of cholesterol	Below 200 (good) 200–239 (borderline bad) 240 or above (bad)
<b>Triglycerides</b>	Another type of fat in the blood; high levels can block arteries	Below 150 mg/dL (good) 150–199 (borderline bad) 200–499 (bad) 500 or above (very bad)

## Things You Can Do to Control Lipids

- Keep body weight normal.
- Follow a diet containing less than 25% to 35% of calories from fat, less than 7% of calories from saturated fat, and less than 200 mg of cholesterol per day.
- Eat a diet that contains more plant-based foods (vegetables, fruits, grains) than animal-based foods (meat, dairy, eggs).
- Exercise at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- Avoid all forms of tobacco.
- Consume no more than 1 to 2 alcoholic beverages per day.

## Web Sites with Good Information about Lipids

### MedlinePLUS

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/cholesterol.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/cholesterol.html)

### American Heart Association

[www.heart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4488](http://www.heart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4488)

### National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/why.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/why.htm)