



American Heart Association®

Life's Essential 8™

→ for kids

HOW TO CONTROL CHOLESTEROL



UNDERSTAND CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that comes from two sources: **FOOD** and your **BODY**.

It is found in foods from animal sources only. It travels in the body by lipoproteins (LDL and HDL).¹

HDL = GOOD

High-density lipoprotein is known as “good” cholesterol.

LDL = BAD

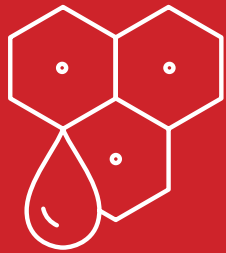
Low-density lipoprotein is known as “bad” cholesterol.

High triglycerides = BAD

Triglycerides are a source of energy for the body, but too much can raise the risk of heart disease and stroke.³

HDL helps keep LDL from sticking to artery walls and reduces plaque buildup. This process can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

heart.org/cholesterol



SCREEN FOR HIGH CHOLESTEROL

Children with high cholesterol are usually healthy and have no symptoms. The only way to know if your child has high cholesterol is to be screened. Kids should have their cholesterol checked at least once between 9–11 years old and again between 17–21 years old.⁶

Learn more at heart.org/lifes8

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

EAT SMART

Eat a healthy diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, lean animal proteins like fish and seafood.

Limit sugary foods and drinks, red or processed meats, salty foods, refined carbohydrates (e.g. white rice, white breads, pastries) and highly processed foods (e.g. chips, packaged soups, sweets).²

MOVE MORE

Physical activity helps improve cholesterol levels.

KNOW YOUR FATS

The fats in food you eat can affect your cholesterol levels. Replace saturated fats (e.g. full-fat dairy products, beef, pork) with unsaturated fats (e.g. avocados, nuts, fish).⁴

NO SMOKING OR VAPING

Smoking lowers good HDL cholesterol. It also raises your risk of heart disease.⁵

TAKE MEDICATION IF DIRECTED

Some children with very high cholesterol should take medication to control their cholesterol levels and prevent heart disease. Talk to your child's health care professional.⁶

¹American Heart Association, What is Cholesterol, <https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/Health-Topics/Cholesterol/What-is-Cholesterol.pdf>

²American Heart Association Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations, <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/aha-diet-and-lifestyle-recommendations>

³American Heart Association, What is Cholesterol, <https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/Health-Topics/Cholesterol/What-is-Cholesterol.pdf>

⁴American Heart Association, Dietary Facts, <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/dietary-fats>

⁵American Heart Association E-cigarettes match traditional smoking in some heart risks, <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2019/11/11/e-cigarettes-match-traditional-smoking-in-some-heart-risks>

⁶Centers for Disease Control, Get a Cholesterol Test, https://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/cholesterol_screening.htm

⁷Cleveland Clinic, High Cholesterol in Children, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12113-high-cholesterol-in-children>