

Be Well, Stay Well

Know your blood pressure and cholesterol

It's important to know your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, as they greatly affect your heart health. You can improve your blood pressure and cholesterol by eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly.

Blood pressure

Blood pressure is typically two numbers written in a ratio, for example 115/75. The top number, or systolic pressure, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats. The bottom number, or diastolic pressure, measures the pressure in the arteries when your heart is at rest, or between heartbeats.

Normal blood pressure is when systolic is less than 120 and diastolic is less than 80 (or 120/80). Hypertension, or high blood pressure, begins when blood pressure is 140/90 or above.

By keeping your blood pressure in a healthy range, you:

- Reduce the risk of overstretching or injuring the walls of your blood vessels
- Reduce the risk of having a heart attack or stroke, and developing heart failure, kidney failure and peripheral vascular disease
- Protect your entire body and provide your tissues with regular supplies of blood that is rich in oxygen

Nurse Health Coaching is a confidential program that can help you achieve a heart healthy lifestyle at no cost to you! If you have coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, high cholesterol or high blood pressure, you are eligible to work with a nurse health coach, who will help you understand and manage your condition.

You can also participate if you have asthma, chronic kidney disease, COPD, chronic pain or diabetes.

To enroll in Nurse Health Coaching, call

1-866-244-8977



Cholesterol

A desirable level for total cholesterol for most people is less than 200 mg/dL. High cholesterol is 240 mg/dL and above, which puts a person at more than twice the risk of heart disease than someone with cholesterol below 200 mg/dL. It's also important to know how much of your total cholesterol comes from High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL) versus Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL).

HDL cholesterol is considered "good" cholesterol because it binds to cholesterol in your blood and transports it away from the organs and back to the liver for disposal. Having HDL cholesterol of 60 mg/dL and above is considered protective against heart disease. The best way to increase your HDL level is through regular physical activity. Smoking can decrease this number.

LDL cholesterol is considered "bad" cholesterol because it carries cholesterol and other fats from the liver to various organs. Less than 100 mg/dL LDL is optimal, and 160 mg/dL is considered high. When too much LDL cholesterol circulates in the blood, it can build up in the inner walls of your arteries. That forms plaque, a thick deposit that narrows the arteries and makes them less flexible. If a clot forms and blocks a narrowed artery, a heart attack or stroke can result.

If you have certain health or family history risks, you may need to maintain even lower cholesterol levels.