

Cholesterol

Self-Management Plan

- Follow your health care provider’s directions regarding cholesterol medicines.
- Do not stop taking any cholesterol medicine without first checking with your health care provider.
- Follow your health care provider’s recommended dietary recommendations, including eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and legumes (beans, peas, lentils).
- Follow your health care provider’s recommendations for physical activity and exercise. A typical goal is 150 minutes of physical activity each week.
- If you smoke, consider quitting.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

Green Flags—All Clear



If you:

- Take medications for cholesterol as prescribed
- Regularly eat a healthy diet
- Are physically active

What this means ...

- Good work!

Keep up the great work!

Yellow Flags—Caution



If you:

- Regularly eat fatty foods
- Do not exercise regularly
- Have been told you have high cholesterol
- Have not had your cholesterol checked within five years
- Are overweight
- Over 20 years of age
- Have a family member with high cholesterol
- Have soft, yellow spots on your eyelids

What this means ...

- You are at risk of having or developing high cholesterol.
- You are at higher risk of a heart attack or stroke.
- Consider dietary changes.

Talk with your health care provider about ways to reduce your cholesterol.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags—Stop and Think



If you:

- Have shortness of breath
- Have irregular heartbeats or a “flip-flop” feeling in your chest
- Have chest pain
- Have pain in jaw, neck, throat, or back
- Have a fast heartbeat
- Have weakness or dizziness
- Have nausea
- Have sweating

What this means ...

- You could be having a heart attack.
- You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately.

Call your health care provider’s office.

Name:

Number:

Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1

If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 9-1-1. Emergency!

Fats and Cholesterol Fast Facts

- Some fat is needed for survival and for our bodies to work properly. The body needs about a tablespoon of fat each day. Though all fats for the same portion size have the same number of calories, some fats are healthier than others.
- Fats can be grouped into “good” fats, “bad” fats, and “trans fats.”
 - **Good fats**—also called unsaturated fats—are usually liquid at room temperature. Some examples are soybean, safflower, corn, peanut, sunflower, canola, and olive oils. Nuts, seeds, olives (including their oils), and avocados are rich in good fats.
 - **Bad fats**—also called saturated fats—are usually solid at room temperature. Some examples are shortening, butter, lard, and bacon grease. These fats can increase your blood cholesterol and the risk of heart disease. Other foods high in bad fats include stick margarines, red meat, regular ground meat, processed meats (sausage, bacon, luncheon and deli meats), poultry skin, whole milk, cheese, cream cheese, and sour cream. Palm kernel oil, coconut oil, and cocoa butter are also considered bad fats because they are high in saturated fat.
 - **Trans fats** are considered deadly. They have more harmful effects on our blood cholesterol

and risk of heart disease, even more than bad fats. Trans fats are found in many processed foods, including cakes, cookies, crackers, icing, margarine, pastries, and most microwave popcorn. The food label will list “partially hydrogenated” or “hydrogenated” oils.

- **Be ALERT!** Food companies can legally claim “no” or “0” trans fat on the label, even when the food has up to a half a gram (.5 mg) per serving.
- Major risk factors that increase high LDL (“bad” cholesterol—above 100 mg/dL) levels include cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, low HDL (“good” cholesterol—below 40mg/dL), family history of early heart disease, obesity, and age (men: 45 years or older, women: 55 years or older).

Reading	Desirable levels
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL (“bad” cholesterol)	Less than 100 mg/dL
HDL (“good” cholesterol)	40 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL

What can you do?

- Choose low fat foods. Make sure you have soluble fiber like oat bran, beans, nuts, and certain fruits and vegetables. Choose healthier meals, eating more lean meats. Take the skin off poultry. Include seafood in your diet—eat fish that is not pan-fried or deep-fried at least twice a week.
- Exercise regularly and, if overweight, consider a healthier eating plan. Even 5–10 pounds can reduce your cholesterol levels.

Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County—plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County. For information about services or interpretation assistance, call 844-348-5464 or e-mail info@communitylivingconnections.org.



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