



Understanding Cholesterol

WHAT IS IT?

- ▶ Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance found in the blood stream and cells.
- ▶ It is used to form cell membranes, some hormones and other tissues.

WHERE DO WE GET IT?

- ▶ Our bodies form cholesterol, mainly in the liver.
- ▶ It is absorbed in the body from foods high in saturated fat & cholesterol – meats, poultry, fish and dairy products.

WHY IS TOO MUCH UNHEALTHY?

- ▶ When elevated, cholesterol and other fatty substances collect in the inner walls of the blood vessels, leading to restricted blood flow to the heart.
- ▶ This buildup is associated with coronary artery disease and can lead to a heart attack.

HOW MUCH IS RECOMMENDED?

- ▶ Less than 300 mg of cholesterol consumed per day.
- ▶ Total cholesterol: <200mg/dL.

Partners at Heart



**Port Huron
Hospital**



**ST. JOSEPH
MERCY HOSPITAL**

partnersatheart.org



Understanding Cholesterol

cont.

WHAT IS LDL CHOLESTEROL?

- ▶ LDL means low-density lipoprotein.
- ▶ L stands for “lousy” cholesterol. A low LDL number is desirable.
- ▶ LDL is the main carrier of harmful cholesterol in the blood.
- ▶ High LDL = increased risk of heart attack and stroke.
- ▶ The desired LDL level is <100 mg/dL.

WHAT IS HDL CHOLESTEROL?

- ▶ HDL means high-density lipoprotein.
- ▶ H stands for “happy” cholesterol. A high HDL is desirable.
- ▶ HDL carries the cholesterol away from the arteries and back to the liver, where it’s passed from the body.
- ▶ High HDL = decreased risk for heart disease (>60).
- ▶ Low HDL = increases risk of heart disease (<40).

WHAT ARE TRIGLYCERIDES?

- ▶ Major energy source for the body.
- ▶ Comes from food and the body makes them.
- ▶ Level > 150 mg/dL = increased risk for heart disease.

Partners at Heart



**ST. JOSEPH
MERCY HOSPITAL**

1.800.326.1811