

## The Highs & Lows of Controlling Cholesterol

You likely know that there's "good" and "bad" cholesterol, but what's the difference between them? And how do you get more of the "good" stuff?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body produces to help it make hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help you digest foods. Those foods, in turn, may also contain cholesterol, stored either in high-density lipoprotein (HDL) or low-density lipoprotein (LDL).

HDL cholesterol is considered "good" because it helps rid the body of excess cholesterol. Too much LDL cholesterol, on the other hand, can build up in the arteries, increasing the risk of heart disease – ergo, "bad."

One of the difficulties of controlling LDL cholesterol is that there are no outward signs that you've got too much. Proper diet and exercise help to reduce the risk of high cholesterol, but age and genetics can sometimes frustrate your efforts to keep "bad" cholesterol in check.

Your best defense against high cholesterol is a good offense. MedBen WellLiving recommends that people age 20 and over get a cholesterol screening from their family doctor at least every five years, though your health care plan may encourage more frequent checks. You can monitor your screening compliance on the **MedBen Access** website – just log in via [medben.com](http://medben.com) and click on "WellLiving Information."



## Getting on Cholesterol's "Good" Side

For most people, controlling their LDL ("bad") cholesterol starts at the grocery store.

- Follow a low-fat diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Limit your intake of saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Adding flaxseed and soluble fiber to your diet can help to lower LDL cholesterol.
- Exercise for 30 minutes at least three days a week.
- Cook light (i.e., broil or grill instead of pan frying).
- Make healthy substitutions (i.e., use vegetable-oil spray to brown or sauté food).
- If diet and exercise aren't enough to bring your cholesterol under control, your family doctor may prescribe medication.
- Control your meal portions.

SOURCES: National Institutes of Health, Heart Healthy Living