



American Heart Association.



ANSWERS by heart



Lifestyle + Risk Reduction Cholesterol

How Can I Monitor My Cholesterol, Blood Pressure and Weight?

High cholesterol, high blood pressure and being overweight or obese are major risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

High blood pressure and high cholesterol are dangerous but have no warning signs. You should schedule regular tests with your doctor's office to make sure your levels are OK. Also talk to your doctor about the healthiest weight for you.

It's important to know your numbers. You can record your blood pressure, cholesterol and weight in the table below to track your progress. Talk to your doctor about your numbers and how they affect your overall risk. Then ask how often to check your levels.



Date						
Blood Pressure (mm Hg)						
Total Cholesterol (mg/dL)						
LDL Cholesterol (mg/dL)						
HDL Cholesterol (mg/dL)						
Triglycerides (mg/dL)						
Weight (pounds)						

(continued)



How Can I Monitor My Cholesterol, Blood Pressure and Weight?

What can I do to lower my cholesterol and blood pressure?

- Eat a heart-healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats, sodium and added sugars. A healthy diet includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry, fish/seafood, legumes (beans and peas), nontropical vegetable oils and nuts.
- Eat at least 8 ounces of non-fried fish each week, particularly fatty fish like salmon.
- Limit red meats. If you eat red meats, select lean cuts of meat. Trim all visible fat and throw away the fat that cooks out of the meat.
- Substitute meatless or “low-meat” dishes for regular entrees.
- Aim to consume less than 1,500 mg per day of sodium. Even reducing your daily intake by 1,000 mg per day can help. Limit your intake of processed, packaged and fast foods, which can be high in sodium.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. If you’re a woman, have no more than one drink a day. If you’re a man, have no more than two drinks a day.
- Be physically active. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of

vigorous activity a week (or a combination of both).

- Reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Don’t smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Take your medicines as prescribed by your health care professional.

How can I manage my weight?

Lifestyle changes such as the ones listed above may help you lose 3% to 5% of your body weight. This could result in meaningful health benefits. Larger weight losses (5% to 10%) can produce even greater benefits. To lose weight, you must take in fewer calories than you use up through normal metabolism and physical activity. The goal is to reduce the number of calories you eat and increase your physical activity.

- Get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week.
- To maintain weight loss or reduce how much you regain, some people need more physical activity each week (200-300 minutes).

If you can’t lose weight on your own, talk to a doctor, registered dietitian (R.D.) or licensed nutritionist. You can work together to create a healthy weight-loss plan.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit heart.org to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up for our monthly *Heart Insight* e-news for heart patients and their families, at HeartInsight.org.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at heart.org/SupportNetwork.

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down your questions for the next time you see your health care professional.

For example:

What kind of physical activity should I do?

What is a healthy weight for me?

MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit heart.org/AnswersByHeart to learn more.