

Cholesterol and Your Family: Making Heart Healthy Choices



Why has my child's cholesterol been checked?

- In 2011 the AAP recommended all children have a cholesterol level between the ages of 9-11 and/or 17-21.
- Children who are at risk for high cholesterol also include:
 - ✓ Have a parent with a total cholesterol higher than 240 mg/dL
 - ✓ Have a family history of cardiovascular disease prior to the age of 55 in men and 65 in women
 - ✓ Have an unknown family history
 - ✓ Are overweight or obese
 - ✓ Have additional risk factors, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or cigarette smoking
- Ranges of total and LDL cholesterol for kids 2 years to 18 years old are:

	Total Cholesterol	LDL Cholesterol
Acceptable	<170	<110
Borderline	170-199	110-129
High	>200	>130

What is cholesterol? What are the "bad" and "good" types?

- The liver makes a gram of cholesterol every day which is essential for certain bodily functions and helps us digest fat. We also consume cholesterol in food. Too much food high in cholesterol and high in saturated or trans fats, especially if combined with a family risk for high cholesterol, can lead to high levels.
- Low-density lipoproteins (LDL): this "bad" cholesterol can coat our arteries in a plaque leading to atherosclerosis. We know that this process begins even in young children. Atherosclerosis over a life-time can lead to coronary artery disease, heart attacks and strokes.
- High-density lipoproteins (HDL): this "good" type moves cholesterol back to the liver and might actually reduce plaques in our arteries. Exercise and being physically active helps increase this level.



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What can I do to improve my child's cholesterol level?

- A diet full of lean meat, fresh fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy is the best way to ensure a healthy weight and cholesterol.
- One hour of moderate activity throughout the day is also strongly recommended – and is fun and gives you energy!
- Your daily diet should have < 300 mg cholesterol and only 30% calories from fat with < 7% saturated fat.
- For additional resources:
 - http://www.choa.org/child-health-glossary/c/ch/cholesterol-and-your-child_kh_parent
 - http://www.choa.org/child-health-glossary/w/wh/what-is-cholesterol_kh_teen
 - http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/Cholesterol_UCM_001089_SubHomePage.jsp



Tip – Take your kid shopping, teach them to read labels and let them pick a new veggie or fruit to try!

Avoid or eat infrequently:

Fried Foods/"Fast food" meals
Packaged snack foods with high saturated fats and trans fat including chips
Desserts high in fat
Sausage and bacon

Eat less frequently:

Red meat and deli meats
Butter and cream cheese
Creamy dressings and gravies
Limit egg yolks to three/week

Eat Plenty of these heart healthy foods:

Lean meats – trim off fat and skin
Cook by baking, roasting or broiling
Fresh or frozen fruits and veggies
Low-fat or skim dairy products
Whole grain breads, rice and pasta
Oatmeal and oat bran products
Use canola, olive or vegetable oil based spreads
Baked snack foods or almonds/walnuts