

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?



Cholesterol is a waxy substance that our bodies need. It is made by our bodies and found in some foods. But too much cholesterol is bad for us. It can form plaque in our blood vessels, which makes it hard for blood to flow.

There are good and bad types of cholesterol. Good cholesterol is called HDL. It is good because it helps clear out bad cholesterol, which is called LDL. Triglycerides are another type of bad cholesterol. LDL and triglycerides cause plaque formation.

You want higher levels of HDL and lower levels of LDL. Adults over 20 should have their cholesterol tested every four to six years.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE AND GET HELP

Visit nyc.gov/health for health news and resources for New York City.

Call MetroPlus at **1.800.303.9626** to speak with a care manager about how to live a healthier life and manage your heart disease.

Call **911** if you're experiencing any of the symptoms of a heart attack.



METROPLUS.ORG 1.855.809.4073
160 Water Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10038



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YOUR GUIDE TO HEART DISEASE



CARING FOR
YOUR HEART



MetroPlus.org

What Is Heart Disease?

Heart disease is serious, and it can sneak up on you. In fact, you may have heart disease and feel fine. It typically occurs when a fatty substance called plaque builds up in the tubes that carry blood to and from your heart. This makes it hard for blood to flow freely. You may not have symptoms until the condition gets worse.

Heart disease refers to a variety of conditions, and it has many names. People call it atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, coronary heart disease, ischemic heart disease or narrowing of the arteries.

Your Treatment Options

MEDICATION: If you have heart disease, your doctor will probably prescribe medication. Drugs commonly used to treat heart disease include:

- **BLOOD THINNERS:** prevent blood clots from forming
- **ACE INHIBITORS:** widen blood vessels and lower blood pressure
- **BETA BLOCKERS:** lower heart rate and blood pressure
- **STATINS:** lower bad cholesterol levels
- **VASODILATORS:** increase your heart's oxygen supply

DIET & LIFESTYLE: A good way to manage heart disease and prevent other health issues is by improving your lifestyle and your diet. Eat a variety of foods that are rich in nutrition: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, legumes and nuts. Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke. Also, stay active.

SURGERY: Some people need more than medication and lifestyle changes. Common surgical procedures for heart disease include an angioplasty, bypass surgery and stent procedures.

HEART CONDITIONS

Heart Attack: Your heart is a muscle. Like other muscles, it needs oxygen to work. A heart attack occurs when your heart's supply of oxygen gets cut off. A clot usually causes this. Heart disease puts you at extra risk for having a heart attack, but taking care of your health can keep your risk in check. Signs of a heart attack may include:

- pain in your upper body or arms
- dizziness
- feeling sick to your stomach
- chest pain or tightness

Call **911** right away if notice these symptoms.

Heart Failure (Congestive Heart Failure):

When you have heart failure, your heart isn't pumping as well as it should. It does not mean that your heart has failed or has stopped. It means that your heart is working but it's not getting enough oxygen to your body. Signs of heart failure include trouble breathing, fatigue and dizziness. Heart disease, high blood pressure and having a heart attack can increase your risk for heart failure.



4 HEALTHY HEART TIPS

FILL UP ON NUTRITIOUS FOOD	STAY ACTIVE	QUIT SMOKING	WATCH OUT FOR UNHEALTHY FOODS
 <p>Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and legumes, as well as fish that's rich in omega-3 fatty acids and skinless poultry.</p>	 <p>30 minutes of exercise most days is a good guideline. Exercise means anything that burns calories, like taking a walk or swimming.</p>	 <p>Smoking is a leading cause of heart disease. Quitting is hard, but your doctor can help you find a way that works.</p>	 <p>Avoid trans fat and partially hydrogenated oils. Limit salt, saturated fats, sweet and added sugars.</p>