

September is National Cholesterol Education Month

Children, young adults and older Americans can have high cholesterol. Learn how to prevent high cholesterol and know what your cholesterol levels mean.

More than 102 million American Adults (20 years or older) have total cholesterol levels at or above 200 mg/dL, which is above healthy levels. More than 35 million of these people have levels of 240 mg/dL or higher, which puts them at high risk for heart disease.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body and many foods. Your body needs cholesterol to function normally and makes all that you need. Too much cholesterol can build up in your arteries. After a while, these deposits narrow your arteries, putting you at risk for heart disease and stroke.

How do you know if your cholesterol is high?

High cholesterol usually doesn't have any symptoms. As a result, many people do not know that their cholesterol levels are too high. However, doctors can do a simple blood test to check your cholesterol. High cholesterol can be controlled through lifestyle changes or if it is not enough, through medications.

How often should you have your cholesterol checked?

- ✓ The National Cholesterol Education Program recommends that adults aged 20 years or older have their cholesterol checked every 5 years.
- ✓ Preventive guidelines for cholesterol screening among young adults differ, but experts agree on the need to screen young adults who have other risk factors for coronary heart disease: obesity, smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, and family history. Less than half of young adults who have these risk factors don't get cholesterol screening even though up to a quarter of them have elevated cholesterol.
- ✓ A simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile can measure your total cholesterol levels, including LDL (low-density lipoprotein, or "bad" cholesterol), HDL (high-density lipoprotein, or "good" cholesterol), and triglycerides.

Can children & adolescents have high cholesterol?

Yes. High cholesterol can develop in early childhood and adolescence, and your risk increases as your weight increases. In the United States, more than one-fifth (20%) of youth aged 12–19 years have at least one abnormal lipid level. It is important for children over 2 years of age to have their cholesterol checked, if they are overweight/obese, have a family history of high cholesterol, a family history of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, or certain chronic condition.

If you have high cholesterol, what can you do to lower it?

Your doctor may prescribe medications to treat your high cholesterol. In addition, you can lower your cholesterol levels through lifestyle changes:

- ✓ Low-fat and high-fiber food (Eat more fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and whole grains).
- ✓ For adults, getting at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity a week. For those aged 6-17, getting 1 hour or more of physical activity each day.
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight.
- ✓ Don't smoke or quit if you smoke.

By: The CDC

Recipe of the Month



"Philly Steak Sandwich"

Serves 2

Ingredients:

- ½ green pepper, thinly sliced
- ½ small onion, thinly sliced
- 6 ounces lean roast beef, shaved
- 2 wheat buns
- ¼ cup cheddar cheese, shredded

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Lightly coat a baking pan and a frying pan with cooking spray. Over medium heat, sauté the peppers and onions until they soften, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the roast beef and sauté for an additional 2 to 3 minutes. Place 1/2 of the roast beef mixture on each bun. Place in the prepared baking dish. Top each bun with 2 tablespoons of the cheese. Bake until the cheese has melted, 2-4 minutes.

Nutritional Information:

Calories 354, Total Fat 11g, Cholesterol 73mg, Total Carbs 34g, Dietary fiber 6g, Protein 33g

Interested in learning additional *healthy* lifestyle tips?
Contact a Care Manager today by calling toll-free 877-396-1402.