

Committed to a Healthier Mississippi.

Cholesterol is a naturally-occurring substance in the body, and it's an important component in maintaining good health. If not properly managed, it can also be a source of serious health concern. Since our bodies already produce all the cholesterol we need, it's important to be aware of how our lifestyle decisions, particularly with regard to diet and exercise, can impact our cholesterol levels.

There are three key factors to consider with regard to cholesterol levels:

- High-density lipoproteins (HDL), usually known as good cholesterol,
- Low-density lipoproteins (LDL), or bad cholesterol, and
- Triglycerides, or fats that exist in the blood.

Know Your Numbers!

LDL value is often considered the best indicator of cholesterol risk, but it's important to know your levels for all three key factors.

	Desirable	At Risk	High Risk
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200	200 - 239	240 and above
HDL	50 or higher	Less than 40	Less than 35
LDL	Less than 100	130 - 159	160 and above
Triglycerides	Less than 150	150 - 199	200 - 499

Since there are no symptoms for high cholesterol, it's important to visit your Network Provider each year for your *Healthy You!* wellness visit. Be sure to talk with your Network Provider about your numbers and how you can manage them through appropriate lifestyle changes.

Eat Healthy

Since our bodies already produce cholesterol, why add more? Take control of cholesterol by eating a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products and lean meats. Be sure to limit your intake of fried and processed foods. A simple rule of thumb is to remember that there is no cholesterol in plant-based foods, so consider making them a main ingredient in your diet.

Eat more of this...	And less of this!
Whole grain breads	White bread
Sweet potatoes	French fries
Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables	Vegetables with added butter or cheese
Skim or low-fat (1%) milk	Whole milk
Sorbet or frozen yogurt	Ice cream
Soft margarine or olive oil	Butter
Skinless grilled chicken or fish	Fried chicken

Exercise

Regular exercise is a simple (and low-cost, if not free!) way to lower your LDL level and raise your HDL level. If you are already exercising, keep up the good work! If you don't currently exercise regularly, be sure to talk with your Network Provider about an appropriate program.

Exercising at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week, can make a tremendous difference in managing your cholesterol. And, it doesn't have to be strenuous exercise – it can be as simple as raking your yard instead of using a blower, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or parking a little farther out at the mall. For most people, just walking is the easiest form of exercise. Be sure to visit the Let's Go Walkin' Mississippi website at www.letsgowalkinms.com for helpful information on walking programs and great places to walk around Mississippi!

Be tobacco-free!

When you use tobacco, you decrease your HDL level and put yourself at risk for other chronic diseases such as cancer or cardiovascular disease. If you don't use tobacco, congratulations and keep it up! If you do use tobacco, you can quit and begin reversing the effects on your body. Talk with your Network Provider about a plan to quit.

For information on quitting, visit the "be healthy" tab on our website at www.bcbsms.com. To find a Network Provider trained in tobacco cessation, click on the "be smoke-free Network" link under the "find a provider" tab. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Network Providers are located statewide, and are ready to help you be tobacco-free today!

Talk with your Network Provider!

If your Network Provider determines that a prescription drug is needed (in addition to a healthy diet and exercise) to help manage your cholesterol, be sure to ask about a low-cost generic drug that can meet your clinical needs.. Your Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi prescription drug benefit encourages the use of generic drugs. Detailed information about generic drugs is available on the secure *myBlue* portal at www.bcbsms.com. Register today to find out more!



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Mississippi**

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be healthy. control cholesterol.