

# Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



September 2005

## National Cholesterol Education Month



September is National Cholesterol Education Month. High blood cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease, which is the number one killer of men and women in the United States. When there is too much cholesterol in the blood, it builds up in the walls of the arteries. High blood cholesterol itself does not cause symptoms, so it is important to test for cholesterol.

### Testing for Cholesterol

According to the National Institutes of Health, everyone age 20 and older should have their cholesterol measured once every five years. A blood test called a lipoprotein profile gives information about total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, and triglycerides. The blood test is done after a 9- to 12-hour fast.

LDL cholesterol is the main source of cholesterol buildup and blockage of the arteries. HDL cholesterol helps keep cholesterol from building up in the arteries. Triglycerides are another form of fat in the blood. This

information and more is available at [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).

### Factors That Affect Cholesterol Levels

Controllable factors that affect cholesterol levels include diet, weight, and physical activity. Saturated fat and cholesterol in food make the blood cholesterol level rise. Being overweight is a risk factor for heart disease, and so is not being physically active.

Uncontrollable factors that affect cholesterol levels include age, gender, and heredity. As women and men get older, their cholesterol levels rise. After the age of menopause, women's LDL levels tend to rise. Also, a person's genes partly determine how much cholesterol the body makes.

### Treating High Cholesterol

There are two main ways to lower cholesterol levels: therapeutic lifestyle changes and drug treatment.

Therapeutic lifestyle changes include a cholesterol-lowering diet, physical

activity, and weight management. If cholesterol-lowering drugs are needed, they are used together with therapeutic lifestyle changes.

### MyHealth@Anthem

An important resource for County Health Pool members is [www.anthem.com](http://www.anthem.com). You can click on "My Health" for newsletters related to cholesterol.

MyHealth@Anthem features information on preventing heart disease and watching cholesterol. Anthem answers questions such as:

- What is a "healthy" cholesterol level?
- How can I improve my cholesterol levels?
- What can my doctor do to help?
- What's the right age to start thinking about cholesterol?

On Anthem's website, you will find over 25,000 articles related to

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# Foods Low in Saturated Fat and Cholesterol




## Cholesterol Education Month

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managing a variety of health-related issues, including managing cholesterol.

### Other Steps

Other steps for reducing cholesterol-related heart disease include learning how to read a food label and calculating the body mass index (BMI).

Discuss your risk for heart disease with your health care provider and ask what you can do to reduce any risk factors. 

Sources: The National Institutes of Health and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield

### Meats, Poultry, and Fish

Instead of: High-fat meats

Try: Lean meats, poultry without skin, fish, bean and grain dishes, turkey thighs

### Cured Meats

Instead of: Pork bacon, pork sausage, ground beef, and pork

Try: Turkey bacon, lean ham, Canadian bacon (read the label to make sure these choices aren't high in sodium), ground skinless turkey breast

### Dairy Products

Instead of: Whole milk, whole milk cheeses, cream, evaporated milk, and sour cream

Try: Skim (nonfat) or 1 percent milk, low fat or part skim milk

cheeses, evaporated skim milk, low fat yogurt

### Fats, Spreads, and Dressings

Instead of: Lard, butter, shortening, regular mayonnaise, and regular salad dressing

Try: Small amounts of vegetable oil, mustard, and nonfat or low fat types of salad dressing, yogurt, or mayonnaise

### Other Tips

Eat fruits and vegetables at meals and for snacks.

Bake, broil, roast, stew, or microwave food instead of frying.

Eat smaller portions.

Source: The National Institutes of Health

Health Awareness newsletters are now available online at [www.ctsi.org](http://www.ctsi.org) in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. If you don't already have Adobe Acrobat on your computer, you can download a free reader at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com) to open these documents.



## Cholesterol Word Search

See if you can find the following words in this month's hidden word puzzle:

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| ACTIVITY    | HEREDITY      |
| AGE         | INDEX         |
| ARTERIES    | LIPOPROTEIN   |
| BAKE        | MASS          |
| BODY        | NONFAT        |
| BROIL       | POULTRY       |
| CHOLESTEROL | SALAD         |
| DIET        | TRIGLYCERIDES |
| DOCTOR      | VEGETABLES    |
| GENDER      | WEIGHT        |
| GENES       | YOGURT        |
| GRAINS      |               |
| HEART       |               |

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A A V R C T A F N O N O N L Y
S T B T H G I E W H H I D I R
T I G B O T T T T G D A S P T
T R I G L Y C E R I D E S O L
T V T S E I R E T R A W A P U
S A E B S O Y E L T E A M R O
E T A G T E B T R I C O Y O P
N K T C E O U A I T O O Y T E
E A O G R T E G I D G R G E A
G D A T O H A V R U E T B I D
O I A T L N I B R A S R E N B
I N D E X T L T L E I A E I O
N R I T Y G E N D E R N L H D
B I O A G K V D R B S A S A Y
R S I D H E D A D D G D T B D
    
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