What is Cholesterol?

Different Types of Cholesterol	
Total Cholesterol	• Measure of the total amount of cholesterol in your blood • Based on the HDL, LDL, and triglycerides numbers
Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL) Cholesterol	• Majority of the body's cholesterol • LDL delivers cholesterol to the body • LDL is known as "bad" cholesterol because having high levels can lead to plaque buildup in your arteries
High Density Lipoproteins (HDL) Cholesterol	• Absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver where the liver removes cholesterol from the body • HDL is known as "good" cholesterol because having high levels can reduce the risk for heart disease and stroke
Triglycerides	• Type of fat found in your blood that your body uses for energy • High levels of triglycerides with low HDL cholesterol or high LDL cholesterol can increase your risk for heart attack and stroke

What is Cholesterol?

Chlesterol Level Facts	
Total Cholesterol Level	Total Cholesterol Category
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200-239 mg/dL	Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above	High
LDL (Bad) Cholesterol Level	LDL Cholesterol Category
Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
100-129 mg/dL	Near optimal/above optimal
130-159 mg/dL	Borderline high
160-189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL and above	Very High
HDL (Good) Cholesterol Level	HDL Cholesterol Category
Less than 40 mg/dL	A major risk factor for heart disease
40-59 mg/dL	The higher, the better
60 mg/dL and higher	Protective against heart disease
Triglycerides	Triglyceride Category
Less than 150 mg/d	Normal level
150-199 mg/dL	Borderline high
200-499 mg/dL	High
500 mg/dL or more	Very High

Keeping Your Cholesterol in Check

The best way to know your cholesterol level is to have a fasting blood test known as a lipid panel.

A lipid panel includes total cholesterol, LDL (low-density lipoproteins), HDL (high-density lipoproteins) and triglyceride levels.

You must "fast" (not eat or drink anything) for at least 8 hours before the blood test. You can drink water during the "fast" before the test.

Generally, you should continue to take your scheduled medications. Be sure to discuss specific fasting requirements with your doctor or laboratory.

Preparing for your lab test