



Important health checks – cholesterol

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a type of fat that is carried in the blood that is essential for many functions in the body. The body generally produces all the cholesterol it needs. When our cholesterol levels are high this puts us at risk of heart disease – such as heart attacks and angina. But not all cholesterol is bad for you!

There are different types of cholesterol. We actually want to have more of the High Density Lipoproteins (HDL's for short), which actually protect against heart disease. It's the Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL's) that we need to avoid as they cause heart disease. Think of it as H for Happy and Healthy and L for Lethal!

So what are triglycerides (or Trigs for short)? They are a stored energy source that are Very Low Density Lipoprotein (VLDL's) and you guess it we don't really want these to get too high either, as they can increase your risk of heart disease if your total cholesterol is high. Lowering alcohol, animal and saturated fats can bring these Trigs down to where they need to be!

So what should our cholesterol levels be?

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| LDL-cholesterol | < 2.5 mmol/L |
| Total cholesterol | < 4.0 mmol/L |
| HDL-cholesterol | > 1.0 mmol/L |
| Triglycerides | < 2.0 mmol/L |

So how do I find out my cholesterol level?

Simply get your GP to take a fasting blood test. Fasting means no eating for 8 hours, so go first thing in the morning!

Source: Guidelines National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand Position statement on lipid management 2005 & the current Lipid Management Guidelines of the National Heart Foundation of Australia (NHFA) and the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) were published in late 2001.