

# SEPTEMBER WELLNESS



## CHOLESTEROL EDUCATION MONTH

Do you know your levels?

Cholesterol levels can be determined through a simple blood test.

Knowing your total cholesterol number and your low-density lipoprotein, or “ldl”, level is important because if these numbers are high, they are considered risk factors for heart disease. How likely is it that you have high cholesterol?

### ***Risk Factors for High Cholesterol Include:***

- ~ **Age:** The risk of high cholesterol increases with age because our bodies can't clear away the cholesterol from the blood as well.
- ~ **Gender:** Men tend to have higher LDL, or “bad”, cholesterol levels than women of age 55 and younger. Men also tend to have lower HDL, or “good”, cholesterol levels than women, at any age.
- ~ **Family History:** If a family member has high cholesterol, you are more likely to also have it because of genes, and factors such as common behaviors, lifestyle habits & environment. An inherited genetic condition called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) would also put you at a higher risk.
- ~ **Health Conditions:** In addition to FH, type 2 diabetes and obesity are health conditions that increase the risk for high cholesterol.
- ~ **Behaviors:** The risk for high cholesterol risk is increased with choices such as eating foods high in saturated fat and trans fat, sedentary lifestyles and smoking.

For more information on risk factors, click here: [Knowing Your Risk for High Cholesterol](#)

### ***Lifestyle Changes That Can Help Prevent, & May Manage, Cholesterol Include:***

- ~ **Healthy Food Choices:** Choose unsaturated fats & foods that are naturally high in fiber. Be sure choices are low in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and added sugars.
- ~ **Stay Physically Active:** Adults will benefit from changes such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and by incorporating at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity each week.
- ~ **Not Smoking and Limiting Alcohol.**

For additional information on cholesterol from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, click here: [September is National Cholesterol Education Month](#)

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**West Suburban Health Group Website:** [westsuburbanhealth.com](http://westsuburbanhealth.com)

**Health Provider Websites:** Fallon: [fchp.org](http://fchp.org) Harvard Pilgrim: [harvardpilgrim.org](http://harvardpilgrim.org)

Tufts: [tuftshealthplan.com](http://tuftshealthplan.com) Blue Cross Blue Shield: [bluecrossma.com](http://bluecrossma.com)