

General Health Guidelines:

- Follow your medical provider’s directions re: cholesterol medications
- Do not stop taking any cholesterol medicine without first checking with your medical provider
- Follow your medical provider’s dietary recommended dietary recommendations, including eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and legumes (beans, peas, lentils)
- Follow your medical provider’s recommendations for physical activity/exercise. A typical goal is 150 minutes of physical activity each week.
- If you smoke, consider quitting
- Maintain a healthy weight

Green Flags – All Clear

What this means:

If you:

- Take medications for cholesterol as prescribed
- Regularly eat a healthy diet
- Are physically active

- Good work!

Keep up the great work!

Yellow Flags – Caution

What this means:

If you:

- Regularly eat fatty foods
- Do not exercise regularly
- Have been told you have high cholesterol
- Have not had your cholesterol checked within 5 years
- Are overweight
- Over 20 years of age
- Have a family member with high cholesterol
- Have soft, yellow spots on your eyelids

- You are at risk for having or developing high cholesterol.
- You are at higher risk of a heart attack or stroke.
- Consider dietary changes.

Call your doctor, nurse, or home health nurse if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags—Stop and Think

What this means:

If you have:

- Shortness of breath
- Irregular heartbeats or a “flip-flop” feeling in your chest
- Chest pain
- Pain in jaw, neck, throat, or back
- A fast heartbeat
- Weakness or dizziness
- Nausea
- Sweating

- You could be having a heart attack
- **This indicates you need to be seen by a physician right away.**

Physician:

Number:

Instructions:

In an emergency situation: Call 911

If you notice a Red Flag, call your physician immediately.

Fats and Cholesterol Fast Facts

- Some fat is needed for survival and for our bodies to work properly. The body needs about a tablespoon of fat a day. Though all fats for the same portion size have the same number of calories, some fats are more healthful than others.
- Fats can be grouped into “good” fats, “bad” fats, and “trans-fats.”
 - * Good fats—also called unsaturated fats—are usually liquid at room temperature. Some examples are soybean, safflower, corn, peanut, sunflower, canola, and olive oils. Nuts, seeds and olives (including their oils) as well as avocados are rich in good fats.
 - * Bad fats—also called saturated fats—are usually solid at room temperature, shortening, butter, lard, and bacon grease. These fats can increase your blood cholesterol and the risk of heart disease. Other foods high in bad fats include stick margarines, red meat, regular ground meat, processed meats (sausage, bacon, luncheon and deli meats), poultry skin, whole-milk, cheese, including cream cheese and sour cream. Palm kernel oil, coconut oil, and cocoa butter are also considered bad fats because they are high in saturated fat.
 - * Trans-fats are considered deadly. They have more harmful effects on our blood cholesterol and risk of heart disease, even more than bad fats. Trans-fats are found in many processed foods, including cakes, cookies, crackers, icing, margarine, pastries, and most microwave popcorn. The food label will read “partially hydrogenated” or “hydrogenated” oils.
- Be ALERT! Food companies can legally claim “no” or “0” trans-fat on the label, even when the food has up to a half a gram (.5mg) per serving.
- Major risk factors that increase high LDL levels include cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol (below 40mg/dL), family history of early heart disease, obesity, and age (men: 45 years or older, women 55 years or older)

Reading	Desirable levels
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200mg/dL
LDL (“bad” cholesterol)	Less than 100mg/dL
HDL (“good” cholesterol)	40mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	Less than 150mg/dL

What can you do?

- Choose low fat foods. Make sure you have soluble fiber, like oat bran, beans, nuts, and certain fruits/vegetables. Choose healthier meals, eating more lean beef. Take the skin off poultry. Include seafood in your diet, including eating fish at least twice a week. This means fish that is not pan fried or deep fried.
- Exercise regularly and if overweight, consider a healthier eating plan. Even 5–10 pounds can reduce your cholesterol levels.

Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington

At the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities, we believe every adult deserves to live with dignity. We connect seniors, adults with disabilities and family caregivers to a full range of free and other community resources designed to offer you choice, improve your quality of life and respect your independence.

For more information, call Information and Assistance

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