

Dear KC-CDC – I hear a lot about cholesterol but I have no idea what it is. Do you? **Curious**

Dear Curious- Cholesterol is a waxy, fatlike substance found in ALL body cells. We actually need cholesterol to digest food, make hormones, build cell walls, and perform other important functions. There are two types. Blood cholesterol is made in the liver. Dietary cholesterol comes from the foods we eat. It's only found in foods from animals, such as meats, dairy products, eggs, and animal fats. But here's the part that's really important. Too much cholesterol can cause serious health problems like blocked blood vessels, heart disease, and stroke.

Cholesterol is carried in "packages" called "lipoproteins" There are two types. Low-density lipoproteins (LDLs) build up in artery walls, causing a waxy substance called plaque. LDL is called "lousy" or "bad" cholesterol. High-density lipoproteins (HDLs) are helpful in carrying excess cholesterol out of the body. HDL is called "good" cholesterol.

Everyone should have a complete cholesterol test at least once every 5 years to healthy adults over 20. If you are a healthy adult, you may be at risk for disease if your results include 1 or more of these readings.

160 or higher for LDLs- lower than 100 is best

240 or higher for total cholesterol- lower than 200 is best

lower than 40 for HDLs – 60 or high is best

If your cholesterol is too high, your healthcare provider may recommend one or more of these steps: changing your diet, losing weight, getting more physical activity, and taking medication.

So – take good care of your health! Learn the facts! Eat a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet! Lower your risk of heart disease by maintaining proper weight, exercising, and not smoking!

Information from the Channing Bete Company. Call the office at 816-245-8523 to get a free copy of this information.