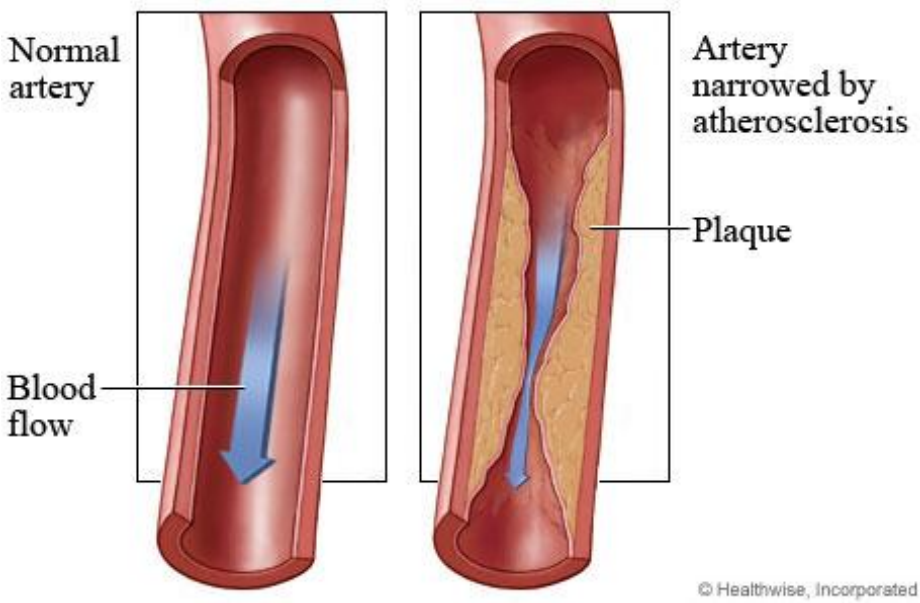
Boulder Community Health

PATIENT EDUCATION

Lowering Your Cholesterol

Patient Information	
What is cholesterol	• Cholesterol is a fatty material that is found in all the cells of your body. • We need cholesterol to make hormones, vitamin D, and other things that help you to digest food. • Your body makes all the cholesterol you need, but we also take in more by eating foods from animal sources (e.g. eggs, meat, cheese, etc.)
Why does my cholesterol level matter	• Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood and oxygen to your body, including your heart. Arteries that supply the heart with blood and oxygen are called coronary arteries. • If you have too much cholesterol in your body, it can form plaque that sticks to the walls of your arteries. Over time this can cause the arteries to become narrow (called atherosclerosis) so that the flow of blood is slowed down or blocked. • If any of the coronary arteries are narrowed, you can have chest pain. If one of them is blocked, you can have a heart attack. 

What do the cholesterol numbers mean

- There are different types of cholesterol. When you have your blood tested for cholesterol, the results will show all the different types:

Type of Cholesterol	Healthy Numbers
High-density cholesterol (HDL): good cholesterol	Greater than 60 mg/dL
Low-density cholesterol (LDL): bad cholesterol	Less than 100 mg/dL
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL
Total cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL

How do I lower my cholesterol

There are several things you can do to lower your cholesterol levels:

- Eat a heart-healthy diet (low saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol)
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get regular physical activity (30 minutes a day)
- Don't smoke
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- If needed, take medicines to lower your cholesterol

Sources: Mayo Clinic, 2022; Cleveland Clinic, 2023 & 2024;

For more information about cholesterol, please speak to your health care provider.

This material is for informational purposes only. It does not replace the advice or counsel of a physician or health care professional. BCH makes every effort to provide information that is accurate and timely, but makes no guarantee in this regard. You should consult with, and rely on the advice of your physician or health care professional. Last reviewed: 07/2025