

# 6 Steps to a Healthy Heart



- 1. Eat Right.** Select mostly fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, nonfat or low-fat dairy, lean meats, and skinless poultry. Include fish such as salmon or mackerel for their omega-3 oils.
- 2. Get Active!** Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise, 5 or more days a week.
- 3. Manage Your Weight.** Lose extra weight by eating right and exercising more.
- 4. Avoid Tobacco Smoke.** If you smoke, quit. Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke - it raises your risk for heart disease.
- 5. Know Your Numbers.** Get screened on schedule for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.
- 6. Control Stress.** Use stress-reduction techniques, such as meditation or deep breathing. Regular exercise also helps to manage stress.

## KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

### Blood Pressure

Less than 120/80	Normal
120-139/80-89	Pre-hypertension
140/90 or higher	High



### Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that can clog arteries, leading to heart disease. Your total cholesterol is made up of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol. Cholesterol tests check the levels of your total blood cholesterol, LDL, HDL, and triglycerides.

### **Total Cholesterol**

Less than 200 mg/dl	Desirable
200 – 239 mg/dl	Borderline High
240 mg/dl or higher	High Risk



[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) is a great resource for information and interactive tools.

**See a heart specialist right here at MVHC!**

**Make an appointment to see Dr. John Bernhardson, Minneapolis Heart Institute**

**MVHC's Outpatient Clinic 507-665-3375**

## More on cholesterol:

### LDL

**Your actual LDL goal depends on your other heart disease risk factors.** 60 mg/dl or more helps lower your risk for heart disease.

Less than 100 mg/dl	Optimal
120 – 129 mg/dl	Near/Above Optimal
130 – 159 mg/dl	Borderline High
160 – 189 mg/dl	High
190 mg/dl or higher	Very High

### HDL

Less than 40 mg/dl for men and 50 mg/dl for women increases the risk for heart disease. An HDL level of 60 mg/dl or more helps lower your risk for heart disease.

### Triglycerides

Less than 150 mg/dl	Normal
150 – 199 mg/dl	Borderline High
200 – 499	High
500 mg/dl or higher	Very High

**LDL is called “Bad” Cholesterol because it can build up in the walls of arteries.** This narrowing can slow or block blood flow and increase your risk of heart disease. High LDL (Bad) Cholesterol is a major cause of heart disease.

Normal Artery



Artery With Buildup of Plaque



**HDL Cholesterol is called “Good” Cholesterol because it helps remove the LDL (Bad) Cholesterol from arteries.**

**Triglycerides** are another type of fat found in your blood. High levels of triglycerides are also unhealthy.

Keep in mind that certain risk factors add to the effects of LDL (Bad) Cholesterol and put you at a greater risk of heart disease. Your doctor or health care professional can give you a more detailed explanation.

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