

Health Information Sheet

CHOLESTEROL

Shrimp is full of cholesterol. But the real cholesterol danger lurks in the slyly packaged “cholesterol-free” cookie. You see, shrimp contains very little of the saturated fat that makes that cookie taste so good. And it’s the *saturated fat* in food-not the cholesterol-that has the greatest effect on your cholesterol level.

No wonder people are confused.

Here’s your guide to understanding what it all means, because what *is* clear is the link between high cholesterol in your blood and heart disease. You’ll find out whether you need a cholesterol test and what “good” cholesterol is, along with quick tips for crating a heart-healthy diet. What you won’t find is a recipe for those cookies.

Cholesterol and Your Heart

Cholesterol, a white, waxy fat found naturally in your body, is used to build cell walls and make certain hormones. Too much of it, though, can clog your arteries and eventually choke off the supply of blood to the heart, which is the reason high cholesterol is a leading risk factor for heart disease. Other factors that put you at risk include:

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- A family history of heart disease
- Being male
- Diabetes
- Obesity

Putting Cholesterol to the Test

Who should be tested: Everyone aged 20 and older, according to the National Cholesterol Education Program, although some researches and medical economists believe this may be overcautious. Their advice: Men with no risk factors can wait until age 35 to be tested; similar women, until age 45.

When: Once every five years.

By Whom: Preferably your doctor, who can measure LDL as well as total cholesterol. If you use an outside service:

- Check to see that the testers are doctors, nurses, or medical technicians
- Get a written copy of your results to show your doctor

What it Means: The test measures the total amount of cholesterol in your blood: the HDL or ”good” cholesterol, which cleanses arteries; plus the LDL or “bad” cholesterol, which builds up and clogs arteries. Here are guidelines for reading your test results.

CHOLESTEROL

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Total Cholesterol</i>	<i>LDL</i>	<i>HDL</i>
HIGH	Above 239	Above 159	Less than 35
BORDERLINE	200-239	130-159	N/A
DESIRABLE	Below 200	Below 130	Above 60

Note: If your cholesterol level places you in the borderline group and you have two or more of the risk factors listed above, you're actually at *high* risk for heart disease. If you have heart disease or diabetes your LDL should be less than 100.