

Cholesterol and heart disease IQ quiz

Are you cholesterol smart? Test your knowledge about high blood cholesterol with the following questions. Circle your answer and then check below to see if you're correct.

Questions	True	False
1. High blood cholesterol is one of the risk factors for heart disease that you can do something about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. To lower your blood cholesterol level, you must stop eating meat altogether.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Any blood cholesterol level below 240 mg/dL is desirable for adults.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Fish oil supplements are recommended to lower blood cholesterol.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. To lower your blood cholesterol level, you should eat less saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol, and lose weight if you are overweight.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Saturated fats raise your blood cholesterol level more than anything else in your diet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. All vegetable oils help lower blood cholesterol levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Lowering blood cholesterol levels can help people who have already had a heart attack.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. All children need to have their blood cholesterol levels checked.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Women don't need to worry about high blood cholesterol and heart disease.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Reading food labels can help you eat the heart healthy way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Quiz answers

1. True.

High cholesterol is one of the risk factors for heart disease and stroke that you can do something about. The others include smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, overweight, and physical inactivity.

2. False.

Red meat is an important source of protein, iron, and other vitamins and minerals. Although some red meat is high in saturated fat and cholesterol – which can raise your blood cholesterol – you don't need to stop eating it. You should, however, cut back on the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol that you eat by trimming the fat off lean cuts of meat and limiting yourself to six ounces of meat or less a day.

3. False.

A total blood cholesterol level of under 200 is desirable and usually puts you at a lower risk for heart disease. If the number is 200–239, you're borderline high and at increased risk, so your doctor will want to check your LDL and HDL numbers.

4. False.

Fish oils are a source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are a type of polyunsaturated fat. Fish oil supplements generally do not reduce blood cholesterol levels. However, fish is a good food choice because it is low in saturated fat.

5. True.

Eating less cholesterol and fat, especially saturated fat, can lower your blood cholesterol levels. Generally, these levels should begin to drop a few weeks after you start a cholesterol-lowering diet. How much these levels drop depends on your previous intake of saturated fat and cholesterol, your weight, your current cholesterol numbers, and how your body responds to the changes. Over time, you might reduce your blood cholesterol level by 10 to 50 mg/dL.

6. True.

Saturated fats raise your blood cholesterol level more than anything else. So the best way to reduce your cholesterol level is to cut back on saturated fats. These fats are found in largest amounts in animal products – butter, cheese, whole milk, ice cream, cream, and fatty meats. They are also found in some vegetable oils – coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils.

7. False.

Most vegetable oils – canola, corn, olive, safflower, soybean, and sunflower oils – contain mostly monosaturated and polysaturated fats, which help lower blood cholesterol when used in place of saturated fats. However, a few vegetable oils – coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils – contain more saturated fat than unsaturated fats.

8. True.

People who have had one heart attack are at much higher risk for a second attack. Reducing blood cholesterol levels can greatly slow down – and in some cases, reverse – the buildup of cholesterol and fat in the wall of the coronary arteries and significantly reduce the chances of a second heart attack. If you've had a heart attack or have heart disease, your LDL level should be around 100 mg/dL, which is even lower than the recommended levels for the general population.

9. False.

Children from high-risk families in which a parent has high cholesterol (240 mg/dL or higher) or in which a parent or grandparent developed heart disease at an early age – 55 or younger – should have their cholesterol levels checked. If the levels are high, they should be lowered under a doctor's supervision – primarily by lowering the saturated fat and cholesterol in their diet – to reduce the risk of heart disease as an adult. Children who are not from high-risk families should also adopt a heart healthy diet to avoid heart disease later in life.

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10. False.

Blood cholesterol levels in both men and women begin to go up around age 20. Pre-menopausal women have levels that are lower than men of the same age. After menopause, a woman's LDL-cholesterol level goes up, and so does her risk for heart disease. For both men and women, heart disease is the number-one cause of death.

11. True.

Food labels have been changed. Look on the nutrition label for the amount of saturated fat, total fat, cholesterol, and total calories in a serving of the product. Use this information to compare similar products. Also, look for the list of ingredients. Here, the ingredient in the greatest amount is listed first, and the ingredient in the least amount is last. So, to choose foods low in saturated fat or total fat, go easy on products that list fats or oils first, or that list many fat and oil ingredients.

Source: The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's, National Cholesterol Education Program, NIH Publication No. 95-3794, May 1995