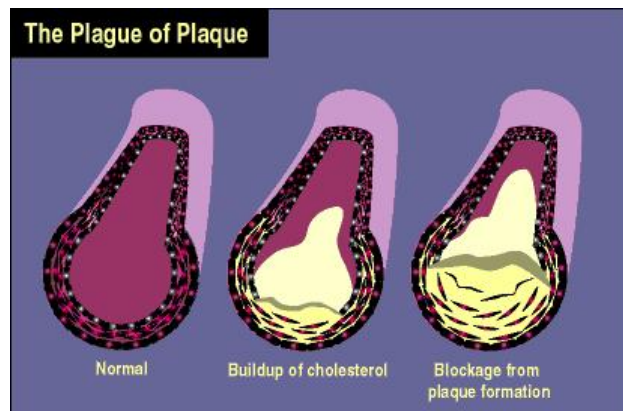


**"Tackling the Monstrosity of Cholesterol" by Rebecca Morley**



**Cholesterol is quite a monster to understand, having the Personalities of both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Lets sort through it here, and help you keep your heart and veins healthy rather than dealing with a plague of plaque later on.**

Did you know that cholesterol is found in every cell in the body? It's used to digest dietary fats, make vital hormones, and build healthy cell walls. Our blood carries cholesterol in lipoprotein particles like cargo ships delivering it to various tissues in the body to be used, stored or excreted. But too many ships in the stream can injure the banks (arteriosclerosis-*deposits of plaque*) or impede the flow of red-blood cells (heart attack or stroke-*lack of oxygen*) If plaques tear or rupture from the banks, a blood clot may form at the rupture site and this can also cause blockages resulting in heart attacks or stroke.



**3 Types of Cholesterol**

- Low-density lipoprotein (**LDL**)-bad cholesterol carries cholesterol particles throughout your body. LDL builds up in the walls of your arteries making them hard and narrow. (the big evil Mr. Hyde)
- Very-low density lipoprotein (**VLDL**)- the type of lipoprotein containing the most triglycerides, (*a type of fat*) attached to proteins in your blood. VLDL is in the bad category, making LDL particles even larger. Hard VLDL deposits accumulate. There is no test for VLDL, and is measured by relationship to triglycerides. (the huge and very tough Mr. Hyde, he can be a killer)
- High-density lipoprotein (**HDL**) This good cholesterol carries extra cholesterol back to the liver and prevents the build up in vessels. Finally we meet the compact healer, Dr. Jekyll!

**What You Need To Know For Monster Control**

Cholesterol is found in animals, never in plants, As you can see we want to keep our LDL and VLDL low, while raising the HDL levels. The goal in cholesterol treatment is to lower the LDL level in people without heart disease.

Type	Desirable	Borderline Risk	At Risk
<b>LDL</b>	< 100mg/dl	< 130-159mg/dl	>160mg/dl
<b>Triglycerides</b>	<150mg/dl	150-199mg/dl	> 200mg/dl
<b>HDL</b>	>60mg/dl	50-59mg/dl	< 50mg/dl
<b>Total</b>	<200mg/dl	200-239mg/dl	<240mg/dl

**Risk factors** include smoking, obesity, poor diet, lack of exercise, high blood pressure, diabetes, and family history of heart disease.

**Lifestyle changes** are essential to improve your cholesterol level. To lower the bad and raise the good cholesterol:

- 1) **Lose extra weight** Even losing 5-10 pounds can make a big difference.
- 2) **Eat healthy foods** We all know we should eat smart, but what does this really mean? A diet with more than 25 grams fiber each day is a great place to start. Amazingly inexpensive, psyllium is an easy source of fiber and may help avoid the need for medication. Several over the counter products are available in your pharmacy. Choose healthier *monounsaturated fats* like olive oil (\*rich in omega 3s), peanut oil, or canola oil instead of saturated fats. Totally eliminate *trans fats, the killer fats* ( found in margarine and many commercially baked goods) from your diet. Five top foods that can help lower numbers are **oats, walnuts, almonds, olive oil, and fish.**
- 3) **Increase physical activity** Start with 30 minutes/day.

**Medications** like statins or cholesterol absorption inhibitors may be needed to bring your levels into the safe range (Ask your health care provider)

**And By the Way**, when was the last time you had your lipids checked? Maybe now's the time.

Adapted from ; [fda.gov/fdac/features/1999\\_chol.html](http://fda.gov/fdac/features/1999_chol.html) & [mayoclinic.com/health/high blood cholesterol](http://mayoclinic.com/health/high_blood_cholesterol)

Eat Smart Program \* Missoula City-County Health Department

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