



LDL Cholesterol: Myths vs. Facts

Myth: If my health care professional hasn't mentioned my LDL "bad" cholesterol, I'm OK.

Fact: You need to take charge of your health. According to the American Heart Association, for most adults, cholesterol screening every five years starting at 19 years of age works well. Work with your health care professional to determine your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Myth: Diet and physical activity are enough to lower my LDL.

Fact: Healthy lifestyle habits like eating a heart-healthy diet and getting regular activity can help lower your LDL, but factors like your age, overall health, family history, diabetes, and past heart attack or stroke also play a role.

Myth: Having high LDL cholesterol is only a man's problem.

Fact: Both men and women tend to see higher cholesterol levels as they get older. Some pregnancy and reproductive health conditions can raise a person's risk of heart disease and stroke, even years later. People should share their pregnancy and reproductive history with their care team and know their numbers including cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar and body mass index.

Myth: I don't need LDL my cholesterol checked until I've reached middle age.

Fact: The American Heart Association recommends all adults 19 and older have their cholesterol checked every five years as long as risk remains low. Your health care professional can help determine the right schedule based on your individual risk factors.

Myth: Thin people don't have high cholesterol.

Fact: People of any body type can have high cholesterol. Being overweight may increase your chances of having high LDL, but being thin doesn't protect you. Regardless of your weight, diet, and amount of physical activity, you should have your cholesterol checked regularly.

Myth: Cholesterol isn't a concern for children.

Fact: High cholesterol can also begin in childhood, sometimes due to inherited conditions or unhealthy habits. Cholesterol screening is recommended for all children between the ages of 9–11 if they have not yet been tested, to help assess risk and guide care, in collaboration with clinicians, parents and caregivers.

Learn more at heart.org/LDL.