

Fast facts for men (and women) about high cholesterol

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(HealthDay)—High cholesterol, a serious risk factor for heart disease,

can affect both men and women, and it's common for cholesterol levels to rise with age. But it's often a problem for men earlier in life than for women.

A study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* found that men with less-than-optimal aerobic fitness are at greater risk of developing [high cholesterol](#) in their early 30s, while men with higher aerobic fitness are likely to avoid this until their mid-40s.

This underscores the importance of a regular fitness program with cardio exercise. Just 150 minutes a week can lower your high cholesterol risk.

Fast Stats on Cholesterol:

- Nearly one-third of U.S. adults have high levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL, or bad) cholesterol and 31 million have high total cholesterol.
- Less than half of adults with high LDL cholesterol are getting treatment and fewer than 30 percent have it under control.
- High total cholesterol doubles [heart disease](#) risk.

Research also points to genetics as a factor in who might develop high cholesterol. More than 80 percent of the cholesterol circulating in your body is made by your liver, and doesn't come from food.

That being said, you do want to avoid trans fats because trans fat does tend to raise cholesterol and increase heart disease risk.

Starting at age 20, you should know your cholesterol numbers. A simple blood test done after a 12-hour fast measures total cholesterol, LDL, and HDL—or the good cholesterol—that has protective benefits.

If you have high total or LDL cholesterol or high triglycerides, another

blood fat, talk to your doctor about [lifestyle changes](#) and possibly medication to get your numbers in a safe zone.

More information: You can download a comprehensive pamphlet about [high cholesterol](#) from the U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

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