

Family History and Your Health

National Cholesterol Awareness Month

What is Cholesterol and What Does It Do?

High cholesterol is a risk factor for many chronic diseases, the major one being coronary artery disease (CAD). CAD is one of the most prevalent and preventable forms of heart disease. It is the leading cause of death in Michigan.

Cholesterol is essential to life. It is an important part of cell membranes and is used to make vitamins and hormones. It is made by the liver, but is also obtained through diet. Too much cholesterol can lead to a high risk for heart attack and/or stroke. Cholesterol is carried in the blood by different particles, including:

- ♥ **High-density lipoprotein (HDL),** called the “good” kind, because it helps to remove cholesterol from the body. Low levels of HDL can increase risk for CAD.
- ♥ **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL),** called the “bad” kind, because too much cholesterol and LDL in the diet can result in “clogged” arteries, also known as plaque, and can increase risk for CAD.

What is the Family Connection?

High cholesterol tends to run in families, so it is important to know your family history. Anyone with an immediate family member (parent, sibling, child) who has had high cholesterol, stroke, or heart disease, especially in a man younger than 55 or in a woman under age 65, should seek medical advice from a doctor.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS!

The American Heart Association recommends all adults 20 years and older have a fasting lipoprotein profile (including total cholesterol, LDL, and HDL) at least every five years.

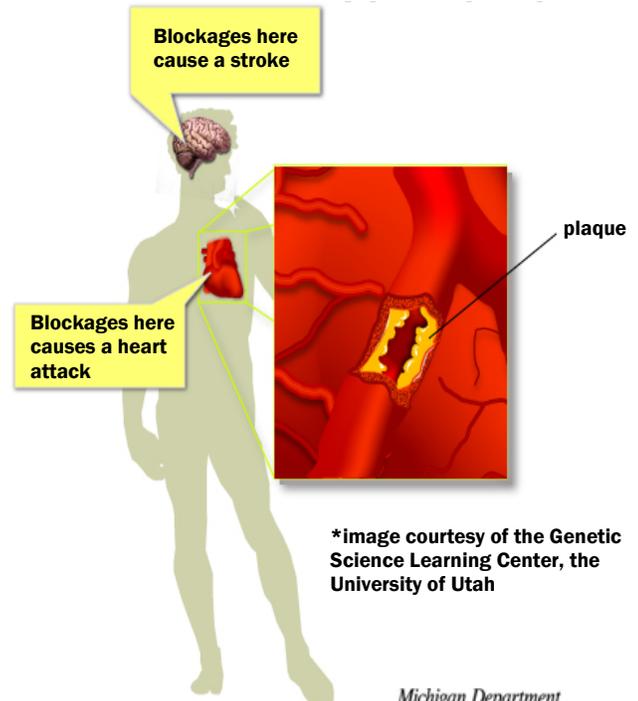
Total cholesterol:

Less than 200mg/dL.....desirable
200-239 mg/dL.....borderline high
240 mg/dL or above.....high

LDL Cholesterol level:

100mg/dL.....optimal/desirable
100-129mg/dL...near/above optimal
130-159mg/dL.....borderline high
160-189mg/dL.....high
190mg/dL or above.....very high

HDL levels should be above 40 mg/dL. 60 mg/dl is recommended to help lower your risk for heart disease.



*image courtesy of the Genetic Science Learning Center, the University of Utah

September is National 5 A Day Month



Eat your colors!

One important way to protect your health and reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease and other chronic diseases is to eat 5 or more servings of colorful fruits and vegetables per day. Deeply colored fruits and vegetables provide a wide range of vitamins, minerals and fiber the body needs to maintain good health and energy levels. For more information on “eating your colors” and great recipes go to

www.5aday.com



2005 Dietary Guidelines

Focus on Fruits— 2 cups per day

Know the limits on fat, salt and sugars— keep your diet low in saturated fats like those found in cheese or whole milk products that tend to raise blood cholesterol, trans fats like those found in vegetable oil and shortening, salt and added sugars. Choose low fat/no fat dairy products and oils such as canola or olive oil that tend not to raise blood cholesterol and offer some protection against heart disease.

Vary your Veggies— 2— 3 cups per day

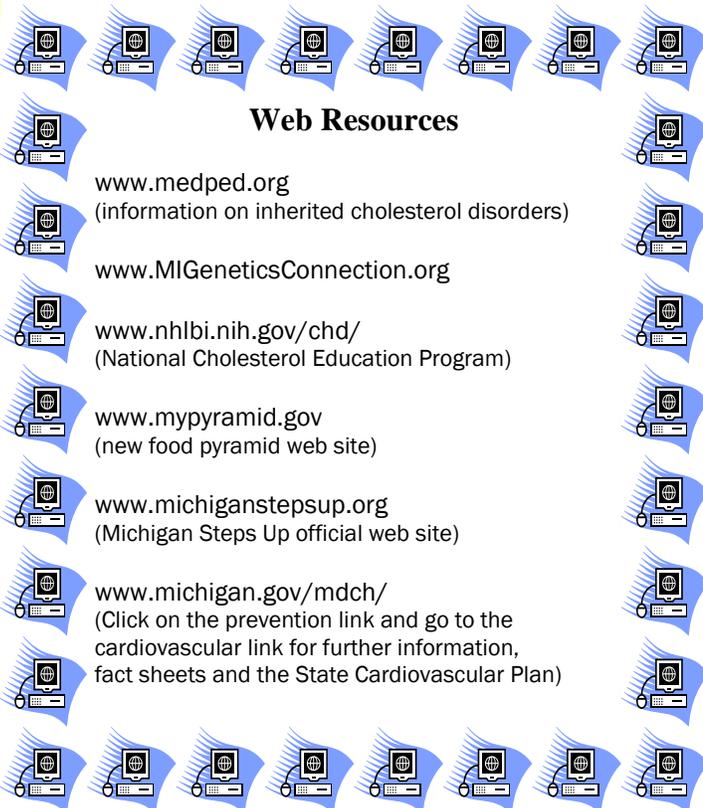
Consume Calcium rich foods— 3 cups per day

Make half your grains whole— 3 ounces per day

Go lean with protein— vary your choice and preparation methods. Bake, broil or grill instead of frying

Go to:

www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/ to view



Web Resources

www.medped.org
(information on inherited cholesterol disorders)

www.MIGeneticsConnection.org

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/
(National Cholesterol Education Program)

www.mypyramid.gov
(new food pyramid web site)

www.michiganstepsup.org
(Michigan Steps Up official web site)

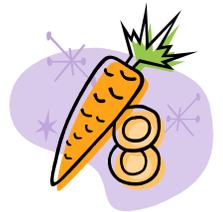
www.michigan.gov/mdch/
(Click on the prevention link and go to the cardiovascular link for further information, fact sheets and the State Cardiovascular Plan)

The Michigan Department of
Community Health would like to
remind you to:

☺ Know Your Family History

☺ Know Your Numbers

☺ Move More, Eat Better, and Don't
Smoke



The patient should be made to understand that he or she must take charge of his own life. Don't take your body to the doctor as if he (the doctor's office) were a repair shop.

~Quentin Regestein