

Completely Well



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April 2024

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Know Your Numbers: Lipid Panel

Learn how basic wellness screenings work and what the screenings can tell you about your health.

A Lipid Panel is a blood test that measures your levels of Cholesterol and Triglycerides. This blood test measures lipids—fats and fatty substances used as a source of energy by your body. Lipids include cholesterol, triglycerides, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), and low-density lipoprotein (LDL).

Note: You will need to fast for a 9-to-12-hour period prior to the test. It's recommended that you drink water, but nothing else during this fast period.

Adults aged 20 and older should have their cholesterol levels checked at least once every 5 years. If your cholesterol level is high or if your health care professional determines that you are at risk for heart disease or stroke, you will need to have it tested more often.

- The majority of the 65 million Americans who have high cholesterol do not have any symptoms. The only way to know if you have high cholesterol is to get a blood test.
- People with high cholesterol have about twice the risk of heart disease as people with lower levels.
- Children can have high cholesterol too. 7% of U.S. children and adolescents have high total cholesterol.
- High cholesterol, particularly if left untreated, can shorten lifespan by increasing the risk of life-threatening cardiovascular events.

High cholesterol levels, particularly elevated LDL cholesterol, are associated with health risks and complications, primarily related to cardiovascular health including heart attacks and strokes. High cholesterol, especially triglycerides, and low HDL cholesterol are risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes.

What is the test looking for?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body. Cholesterol is used by the body to make hormones, vitamin D, and to help you digest foods. Cholesterol is manufactured in our body by the liver, and it is circulated throughout our body in the bloodstream. Our bodies make all of the cholesterol we need; however, cholesterol is also found in foods from animal sources, such as egg yolks, meat, and cheese.

Simply put, you want your HDL number to be high and your LDL to be low. The combined information from these measurements helps healthcare professionals assess your risk of heart disease and make recommendations for lifestyle changes or medications if necessary. The optimal or healthy ranges for these lipid components may vary depending on individual health factors, so it's important to discuss the results with your healthcare provider for proper interpretation and guidance. High cholesterol is a condition that demands attention. But with a healthy diet, exercise, and a plan developed with your doctor, cholesterol levels can be lowered.



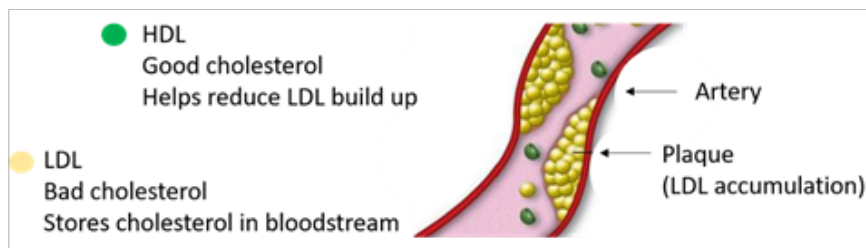
Interpreting Your Lipid Panel Results

There are two kinds of lipoproteins that carry cholesterol in the blood: Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL) and High Density Lipoprotein (HDL).

High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL): You want your HDL to be greater than 60 mg/dL. Often considered the “Good” Cholesterol, it carries cholesterol away from the tissues to the liver where it is removed from the body. A low level of HDL will increase your risk for heart disease.

Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL): Your LDL should be less than 100 mg/dL. Often referred to as “Bad” cholesterol, it carries the cholesterol from the liver to tissues and the arteries. The waxy substance can build up in blood vessels and cause blockages. The higher your LDL level is in the blood, the higher your risk of heart disease.

Very Low-Density Lipoprotein (VLDL): A normal VLDL cholesterol level is 2 to 30 mg/dL. VLDL is also “bad” cholesterol. VLDLs are produced by the liver and transport triglycerides and cholesterol to tissues in the body. Contributes to the buildup of plaque in your arteries.

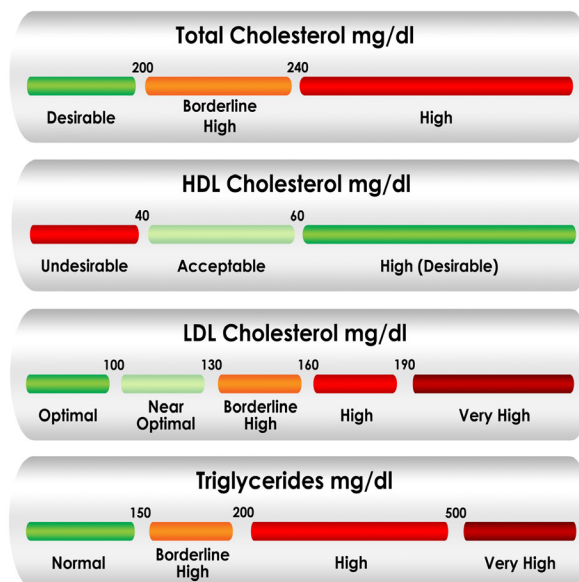


What is plaque? Plaque in your arteries refers to the buildup of fatty deposits, cholesterol, calcium and other substances that can collect on in the inner walls of your arteries. This condition can lead to coronary artery disease when your coronary arteries become narrowed or blocked by plaque.

Triglycerides: Level should be less than 150 mg/dL for adults. These are fatty acids that are often measured alongside cholesterol levels when you get a lipid profile or a cholesterol blood test. When you eat, your body converts the calories that you don't need into triglycerides, which are stored in fat cells.

Total cholesterol: Optimal level is less than 200 mg/dL. This calculation is made up of HDL, LDL, and VLDL cholesterol. Each number means something different to your health. Total cholesterol is simply the total amount of cholesterol in your body (as well as 20% of your triglyceride levels).

Cholesterol ratio is another way to evaluate cholesterol health. The cholesterol ratio is calculated by dividing total cholesterol by your HDL number. The American Heart Association recommends a ratio below 5, with the ideal ratio being 3.5.



Note: mg/dL stands for milligrams per deciliter. It is a unit of measurement used to express concentration or the amount of a substance in a specific volume of liquid. In this case, milligrams (mg) are a unit of mass, and deciliter (dL) is a unit of volume.

The Best Way to Get Something Out of Your Daily Walk

April 3rd is National Walking Day. Walking is a great way to get in your daily physical and cardio activity. It's also great for your mental health. Many people count steps, aiming for at least 7500 steps a day.

Remember that childhood song, "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes?" That song is a good reminder of the body parts to keep in mind when you walk any time, not just for your fitness. In order for you to get the most from your walk you may want to keep the following tips in mind.

Posture. Make sure to stand tall with an elongated spine as if you are being lifted from the crown of your head. Keep your chin parallel to the ground. If you walk with poor posture it's more difficult to breath correctly, so this is an important part of making your walk work best for your body.

Look up. Keeping your eyes forward about 10 to 20 feet in front of you instead of on your phone, your fitness device or directly at your feet helps with your posture, but also keeps you safe from obstacles.

Shoulders. Your shoulders should be back, down and relaxed. You should swing your arms from your shoulders and your arms should swing back and forth instead of across your body, and especially shouldn't swing any higher than your chest. Your elbows should be slightly bent, and your wrists should be relaxed but firm, and you should not be gripping your hands tightly.

Back. Practice finding a neutral position for your back when you aren't walking and try to find that same position when you are walking. Your back should not be arched (so your belly is sticking out) or hunched forward (so that your tailbone is tucked). You should feel like your core is engaged.

Feet. Try to keep your footsteps light. Your foot should roll naturally from heel to toe. You want to walk so that the pounding on your joints, especially knees, is minimized. Try not to bounce up and down but think about gliding forward smoothly.

Relax, enjoy, and get your steps in. It's important for your health.



Having a “Bad” Day? Tools to Help You Turn it Around

Mindfulness. Know your feelings and name them. Try to figure out the cause of your stress and emotions. Be specific. For example, don't just say “I'm having a bad day,” or “I'm stressed.” Name individual emotions behind your stress such as anger, sadness, etc. You may want to write the emotions down so that you can acknowledge them.

Be active. Don't allow yourself to be so overwhelmed by your emotions on the bad day that you don't get up and move. Physical activity can help to lift your mood and allow your mind to work on problems.

Distract yourself from a bad day by doing something that you enjoy. Make yourself laugh by watching a comedy, reading, or listen to music that you love. Hobbies and reading are great ways to give yourself a break from the day and to allow your mind to focus on something else.

Consider the long-term effects of this “bad” day. Are the consequences of what made this day so bad going to affect you for a few minutes, a few days, a few years? You may even want to make a pro/con list so that you can put things into perspective.

Sleep and eat a healthy meal. Do not allow a bad day to derail your healthy habits. Making good decisions about your overall health will help you to put the day in perspective and help you to feel better

Connect with others. Contact friends, family, a trusted advisor. Play with your pet. Volunteer to help others.

Find a way to be positive about yourself. Be grateful for specific people and things in your life, find a task to do that you know you can complete with ease and satisfaction, praise yourself for things that you have achieved.

FOUR YEARS DOWN THE COVID ROAD

It's April 2024 and we just passed the 4th anniversary of the big changes that COVID brought to our lives. This prompted me to reflect a bit on what's happened in the past 4 years.

- Thankfully, we're now mostly free of the most drastic consequences of COVID... but it doesn't look like it's going to completely leave us alone any time soon. Just another thing we have learned to live with and work around, like cold and flu season.
- A lot has changed since March of 2020. I know for me, having my business shut down for months was no fun. However, it forced me to innovate and become a better coach and business owner. For example, I have learned to use software and apps to deliver coaching services. I was able to continue to provide my services to my customers and I learned new things. I never would have learned how to use those software services and apps if COVID hadn't shut down my gym.
- I've noticed that people aren't so tied down to their 9-5 in-person work schedule. People are working smarter and taking more time for themselves.
- I get outside and walk a lot more than I ever did. I appreciate nature and things in my environment a lot more, too. I never realized how amazing sunrise and sunset were until I watched them happen a few times.
- We're more adaptable than we used to be, and that's good.
- We're more resilient than we used to be, and that's even better.

What's changed for you? What do you do differently and better than you did four years ago?

Contributer: Erin Long, Longevity Fitness

Benefits of Green Powders

You may have seen advertisements for green, supergreens or superfood powders that promote health benefits. These powders are dietary supplements that typically contain a variety of concentrated nutrients from green vegetables, fruits, algae, seaweed, grasses, and other plant sources. Specific ingredients will vary among different products, and some may also include probiotics, digestive enzymes, herbs and natural sugar substitutes (to counteract the “grassy” flavor).

The powders are generally low in calories, and depending on the name brand they may be vegan, organic and non-genetically modified but mixing them with anything other than water may add calories and added sugars. Some green powders are intended to be meal replacements. In that case their calorie count will be higher, so make sure to check the intended use and calories that you will consume when you use these powders.

It’s important to note that while green powders can be a convenient way to supplement nutrient intake, they should not replace whole, diverse, and balanced meals. Consult with a healthcare professional before incorporating them into your diet, especially if you have pre-existing health conditions or are pregnant.

Wondering if green powders would be worth adding to your diet? Here are some potential health benefits associated with the consumption of green powders:

- **Rich in Nutrients:** Provides a concentrated source of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and other essential nutrients. Nutrients vary, but tend to be high in selenium, iodine, chromium, and vitamins A, C and K.
- **Antioxidant Support:** Often rich in antioxidants. Antioxidants are associated with a reduced risk of chronic diseases and aging-related conditions.
- **Detoxification Support:** Some ingredients in green powders, such as chlorella and spirulina, are believed to have detoxifying properties, helping to eliminate heavy metals and toxins from the body. However, more research is needed to fully understand these potential benefits.
- **Improved Digestive Health:** The fiber content in green powders, derived from ingredients like wheatgrass and barley grass, may support digestive health by promoting regular bowel movements and feeding beneficial gut bacteria.
- **Anti-Inflammatory Effects:** Certain components in green powders, such as polyphenols and chlorophyll, may have anti-inflammatory properties, contributing to reduced inflammation in the body.

Want to know more?

Connect with New Avenues for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well-being.



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