

# Numbers That Count For A Healthy Heart



**American  
Heart  
Association®**  
Learn and Live

NUMBERS	GOAL
<b>TOTAL CHOLESTEROL</b>	Less than <b>200 mg/dL</b>
<b>LDL "BAD" CHOLESTEROL</b> (There are different goals for each level of risk for heart disease.)	<p>People who are at low risk for heart disease: Less than <b>160 mg/dL</b></p> <p>People at intermediate risk for heart disease: Less than <b>130 mg/dL</b></p> <p>People at high risk for heart disease including those who have heart disease or diabetes: Less than <b>100 mg/dL</b></p> <p>People at very high risk for heart disease: Less than <b>70 mg/dL</b></p>
<b>HDL "GOOD" CHOLESTEROL</b>	<p>Women: <b>50 mg/dL</b> or higher</p> <p>Men: <b>40 mg/dL</b> or higher</p>
<b>TRIGLYCERIDES</b>	Less than <b>150 mg/dL</b>
<b>BLOOD PRESSURE</b>	Less than <b>120/80 mmHg</b>
<b>FASTING GLUCOSE</b>	Less than <b>100 mg/dL</b>
<b>BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)</b>	Less than <b>25 kg/m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE</b>	<p>Women: <b>35 inches</b> or less</p> <p>Men: <b>40 inches</b> or less</p>
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b>	<p>At least <b>30 minutes of moderate-intensity</b> aerobic activity at least <b>5 days per week</b> for a total of 150</p> <p>OR</p> <p>At least <b>25 minutes of vigorous</b> aerobic activity at least <b>3 days per week</b> for a total of 75; or a combination of the two</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Moderate to high intensity <b>muscle-strengthening activity</b> at least <b>2 or more days per week</b> for additional health benefits.</p>

## DIET AND NUTRITION

The amount of food you need depends on your personal calorie needs and health status. If you need 2,000 calories each day you should:

- Eat **6 to 8 daily servings of grain products**, with at least half as whole grains.  
*1 serving = 1 slice bread, 1oz. dry cereal, or ½ cup cooked rice.*
- Eat **4 to 5 servings of fruits and vegetables** each day, in a variety of colors and types.
- Eat **2 to 3 servings of fat-free or low-fat dairy** products each day.
- Eat **3 to 6 oz. (cooked) of lean meats, poultry or seafood** per day.  
*3 oz. of meat or poultry is about the size of a computer mouse; 3 oz. of fish is about the size of a checkbook.*
- Limit intake to **2 to 3 servings** per day of fats and oils. Use liquid vegetable oils and soft margarines most often to reduce saturated and trans fats.  
*1 serving = 1 teaspoon of soft margarine or 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise.*
- Eat **3 to 5 servings** per week of nuts, seeds and legumes.  
*1 serving = 1/3 cup nuts, 2 tablespoons peanut butter or ½ cup dry beans or peas.*
- Limit **cholesterol intake to 300 mg per day** for people with no heart disease risk factors or to **200 mg per day** for those with **heart disease risk factors**.
- Aim to eat less than **1,500 mg of sodium** per day.
- Limit **added sugars to no more than half of your discretionary calories**. For most women that is about 100 calories and for most men about 150 calories, or about 6 teaspoons per day for women and 9 teaspoons per day for men.

## TOBACCO

Eliminate **all** tobacco products and exposure to secondhand smoke.

## ALCOHOL

Women: no more than **1 drink per day**.  
Men: no more than **2 drinks per day**.  
*1 drink = 4 oz. wine, 1 oz. liquor or 12 oz. beer.*

# Recommended Screenings / Risk Factors



Recommended Screening	How Often?	Starting When?
<b>CHOLESTEROL</b> <i>("fasting lipoprotein profile" to measure total, HDL and LDL cholesterol, and triglycerides)</i>	Every 5 years for normal-risk people; <b>more often if any of the following apply to you:</b> → you have a total cholesterol above 200 mg/dL → you are a man over age 45 or a woman over age 50 → your HDL (good) cholesterol is less than 40 mg/dL (if you're a man) or less than 50 mg/dL (if you're a woman) → you have other risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke	Age 20
<b>BLOOD PRESSURE</b>	Each regular healthcare visit or at least once every 2 years <b>if blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg</b>	Age 20
<b>BLOOD GLUCOSE TEST</b>	Every 3 years	Age 45
<b>WEIGHT / BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)</b>	Each regular healthcare visit	Age 20
<b>WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE</b>	As needed to help evaluate cardiovascular risk	Age 20
<b>DISCUSS SMOKING, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND DIET</b>	Each regular healthcare visit	Age 20

## CORONARY HEART DISEASE RISK FACTORS

### Major Risk Factors That **Cannot** Be Changed

- **Increasing Age:** The vast majority of people who die of coronary heart disease are 65 or older.
- **Male Sex (Gender):** Men have a greater risk of heart attack than women do, and they have attacks earlier in life.
- **Heredity (Including Race):** Children of parents with heart disease are more likely to develop it themselves.

### Major Risk Factors That **Can** Be Changed

- **Tobacco Smoke:** Smokers' risk of developing coronary heart disease is 2-4 times that of nonsmokers.
- **High Blood Cholesterol:** As blood cholesterol rises, so does risk of coronary heart disease.
- **High Blood Pressure:** High blood pressure increases the heart's workload, causing the heart to thicken and become stiffer.
- **Physical Inactivity:** An inactive lifestyle is a risk factor for coronary heart disease.
- **Obesity and Overweight:** People who have excess body fat — especially if a lot of it is at the waist — are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke.
- **Diabetes:** Diabetes seriously increases your risk of developing coronary heart disease.

### Other Factors That Increase Cardiovascular Risk

- **Stress:** Individual response to stress may be a contributing factor.
- **Alcohol:** If you drink, limit your alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks per day for men and no more than one drink per day for women.
- **Diet and Nutrition:** A healthy diet is one of the best weapons you have to fight cardiovascular disease.