

Lipid (Cholesterol) Results

A lipid Cascade or panel is a complete cholesterol test, measuring the total amount of cholesterol, the HDL cholesterol, the LDL cholesterol and the triglycerides in your blood. The results are written in mg/dl, meaning the number of milligrams of the substance tested found in each deciliter of blood.

Cholesterol is fat-like substance in the blood which, if elevated has been associated with heart disease.

Total Cholesterol: High cholesterol in the blood is a major risk factor for heart and blood vessel disease. Cholesterol in itself is not all bad; in fact, our bodies need a certain amount of this substance to function properly. However, when the level gets too high, vascular disease can result. A total cholesterol of less than 200, and an LDL Cholesterol of 100 or less is considered optimal by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The levels that your doctor will recommend depend upon whether you are at high risk for cardiovascular disease.

As the level of blood cholesterol increases, so does the possibility of plugging the arteries due to cholesterol plaque build-up or atherosclerosis. When

the arteries feeding the heart become clogged and rupture, a heart attack may occur. If the arteries that go to the brain are affected, then the result is a stroke. Increased cholesterol may also lead to diabetes, thyroid, liver and pancreatic disease.

There are two major kinds of cholesterol, High Density Lipoprotein (HDL), Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL)

LDL Cholesterol is considered "bad cholesterol" The lower the LDL the better. This level can be decreased with reduction in fat intake, weight control, and regular exercise. Try to limit saturated fats, (butter, whole milk products, cheese and meat) these raise your LDL. You should ask your doctor which LDL target range he or she wants for you.

HDL cholesterol is considered the "good cholesterol" as it protects against heart disease by helping remove excess cholesterol deposited in the arteries. The higher the value for the HDL, the lower the

risk of developing heart disease. HDL can be increased with aerobic exercise, moderate amounts of monounsaturated fats and quitting smoking.

Triglyceride is another type of fat in the blood that is affected primarily by your diet. High levels indicate you are eating more calories than your body can burn. This blood fat is also involved in arteriosclerosis (thickening and hardening of arteries), diabetes, thyroid, liver and pancreatic disease. Triglyceride levels over 150 mg/dl may be associated with problems other than heart disease. Ways to lower triglycerides:

- 1) Weight reduction, if overweight. Limit concentrated sweets such as sugar, honey, jelly, candy, cookies, cakes, pies, puddings and sugar-sweetened cereals. Replace concentrated sweets with high fiber foods such as fruit, sugar free gelatin and low fat puddings.
- 2) Reduce animal fats in the diet: eat more fish; some good choices are tuna, salmon, herring, bluefish and lake trout.
- 3) Ask your physician about medications available to help manage your cholesterol.
- 4) Get regular aerobic exercise. Exercise raises your HDL (good) cholesterol. Walk, ride a bike or swim for at least 30 minutes,

5 times a week. Check with your physician before beginning an exercise program.

5) Decrease alcohol and sugar consumption—alcohol and sugar are not fats, but the body can convert them into fats then dump those fats into your blood stream. Fresh fruit can contain a large amount of fructose sugar and can increase triglycerides and blood sugar levels. Fruit juice and dried fruit are also high in calories and can add unwanted calories. Replace fruit juice and dried fruit with fresh fruits that have more fiber and fewer calories.

6) Limit refined- carbohydrates, these are converted to triglycerides when eaten in excess. Refined carbohydrates include white flour, white bread, white rice and some pasta. Limit portion sizes of these foods or replace them with whole wheat bread, lentils, whole grains, brown rice, spinach and whole wheat pastas.

Sources for resource are:

www.webmd.com

www.familydoctor.org

www.mayoclinic.com



Understanding Your Cholesterol Results