**CHOLESTEROL & HDL**

**Cholesterol** is a soft, waxy substance found in the lipids (fats) of your bloodstream and in all of your body’s cells. It’s an important part of a healthy body, but a high level of cholesterol is a major risk factor for serious health problems.

To determine how your cholesterol levels affect your risk of heart disease, your doctor will also take into account other risk factors such as age, family history, smoking, and high blood pressure.

**HDL is the good cholesterol.** Medical experts believe that HDL helps to lower the amount of bad cholesterol in your body. High levels of HDL could lower your risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Smoking, being overweight, and being sedentary can all result in lower HDL cholesterol. To raise your HDL level, avoid tobacco smoke, maintain a healthy weight, and get at least 30-60 minutes of physical activity more days than not.

**Tips to Lower Your Cholesterol and Raise HDL**

- Reduce the saturated fat in your diet. Eat less meat and fried snacks. Also try non-fat or low-fat dairy products.
- Reduce the cholesterol in your diet. Eat less egg yolks and fatty meats.
- Increase the fiber in your diet. Enjoy oats, barley, black beans, peas, and many fruits and vegetables.
- Maintain a healthy, lean body weight.
- Quit or never start smoking.
- Exercise regularly. Try walking 5-6 days a week.

**NOTE:** Currently there are no established ranges for TC/HDL ratio; however, some experts have suggested that the goal for the ratio is a value <4.5, and a value >6 increases an individual’s risk for heart disease.

**WHAT COULD THE RESULTS INDICATE?**

**Total Cholesterol Level:**
- **Desirable:** Less than 200 mg/dL
- **Borderline – High Risk:** 200 – 239 mg/dL
- **High Risk:** 240 mg/dL and over

**HDL Cholesterol Level:**
- **Avg. Male 40 – 50 mg/dL:**
  - <40 mg/dL: **High Risk**
- **Avg. Female 50 – 60 mg/dL:**
  - <50 mg/dL: **High Risk**
  - 60 mg/dL and higher: **Ideal**

Get Educated! Visit These Online Resources for More Information.

American Heart Association- www.americanheart.org
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute- www.nhlbi.nih.gov