

# TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH CHALLENGE

## ***"It's in the Numbers"***

### Recommended Health Screenings and Readings

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Knowing and understanding your important health numbers and screenings can help you and your health care provider understand the status of your health. It can also guide your personal health planning to improve or maintain healthy numbers.

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# RECOMMENDED HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

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## **Obesity**

Have your body mass index (BMI) calculated to screen for obesity. You can determine this yourself by using the BMI calculator from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>



## **Cholesterol**

Have your cholesterol checked regularly, starting at age 35 for men and 45 for women. If you're a man younger than 35 or a woman younger than 45, talk to your doctor about whether to have your cholesterol checked at an earlier age if:

- You have diabetes or high blood pressure
- Heart disease runs in your family
- You smoke

## **Blood pressure**

Have your blood pressure checked at least every year. A blood pressure reading is considered high if it is 140/90 or higher.

## **Colorectal cancer**

Have a test for colorectal cancer at age 50. Your doctor can help you decide which test is right for you. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to be tested at an earlier age.

## **Diabetes**

Have a fasting blood sugar or glucose tolerance test done every three years if you are over 45. If you have one or more risk factors — such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, are overweight or obese, or a family history — an annual screening for diabetes is recommended.

## **Depression**

Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. If you have felt “down” or hopeless for more than two weeks and have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things you normally enjoy, you may be depressed. Talk to your doctor about being screened for depression.

## ADDITIONAL SCREENINGS RECOMMENDED FOR MEN INCLUDE

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### **Abdominal aortic aneurysm**

If you are between age 65 and 75 and have ever smoked (100 or more cigarettes during your lifetime), you need to be screened for an abdominal aortic aneurysm, an abnormally large or swollen blood vessel in your abdomen.

### **Prostate cancer**

There is insufficient data to recommend for or against prostate cancer testing. The American Cancer Society recommends that the PSA blood test and digital rectal exam be offered to men who have average risk at age 50 and to men at high risk (African-Americans and those with a strong family history) at age 45. Talk to your doctor about what is right for you.



## ADDITIONAL SCREENINGS RECOMMENDED FOR WOMEN INCLUDE

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### **Breast cancer**

Have a mammogram every one to two years starting at age 40.

### **Cervical cancer**

Have a Pap smear every one to three years if you:

- Have ever been sexually active
- Are between the ages of 21 and 65

### **Osteoporosis (*thinning of the bones*)**

Have a bone density test beginning at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis. If you are between the ages of 60 and 64 and weigh 154 pounds or less, talk to your doctor about being tested.

## RECOMMENDED HEALTH VALUES

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### **1. Blood Pressure – the force of the blood against artery walls when the heart beats and rests.**

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, increases the risk for heart disease and stroke. High blood pressure is called the “silent killer” because it often has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people don’t realize they have it. That’s why it’s important to get your blood pressure checked regularly.



#### **Systolic**

The top number, the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart muscle contracts).

#### **Diastolic**

The bottom number, the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle is resting and refilling with blood).

## BLOOD PRESSURE

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<b>Category</b>	<b>Systolic mm Hg</b>		<b>Diastolic mm Hg</b>
<b>Normal</b>	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
<b>Prehypertension</b>	120–139	or	80–89
<b>High Blood Pressure – Stage 1</b>	140–159	or	90–99
<b>High Blood Pressure – Stage 2</b>	160 or higher	or	100 or higher
<b>Hypertensive Crisis (Emergency care needed)</b>	Higher than 180	or	Higher than 110

### **How is high blood pressure diagnosed?**

Your health care providers will want to get an accurate picture of your blood pressure and track what happens over time. Starting at age 20, the American Heart Association recommends a blood pressure screening at your regular wellness visit or once every two years, if your blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg.

Your blood pressure rises with each heartbeat and falls when your heart relaxes between beats. Although blood pressure can change from minute to minute with changes in posture, exercise, stress or sleep, **it should normally be less than 120/80 mm Hg for someone 20 or older.** About one in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure.

***If your blood pressure reading is higher than normal:***

Your doctor may take several readings over time and/or have you monitor your blood pressure at home before diagnosing you with high blood pressure.

***A single high reading does not necessarily mean you have high blood pressure.***

However, if readings stay at 140/90 mm Hg or above over time, your doctor will likely want you to begin a treatment program. Such a program almost always includes lifestyle changes and often prescription medication.

If, while monitoring your blood pressure, you get a systolic reading of 180 mm Hg or higher OR a diastolic reading of 110 mm Hg or higher, wait a couple of minutes and take it again. If the reading is still at or above that level, seek immediate emergency medical treatment.

Even if your blood pressure is normal, you should consider making lifestyle modifications to prevent high blood pressure and improve your heart health.

***Which number is more important, top (systolic) or bottom (diastolic)?***

Typically, more attention is given to the top number (the systolic blood pressure) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50. In most people, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age due to increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term buildup of plaque, and increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.



## RECOMMENDED HEALTH VALUES

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### 2. Cholesterol – a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs.

When you have too much cholesterol in your blood, it can build up on the walls of your arteries. Having high blood cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. About 1 of every 6 adult Americans has high blood cholesterol.



TOTAL CHOLESTEROL LEVEL	Category
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable level that puts you at lower risk for coronary heart disease.
200 to 239 mg/dL	Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above	High cholesterol. A person with this level has more than twice the risk of coronary heart disease as someone whose cholesterol is below 200 mg/dL.
HDL (GOOD) CHOLESTEROL LEVEL	Category
Less than 40 mg/dL (for men)	Low HDL cholesterol. A major risk factor for heart disease.
Less than 50 mg/dL (for women)	
60 mg/dL and above	High HDL cholesterol. An HDL of 60 mg/dL and above is considered protective against heart disease.

### HDL

Known as the “good” cholesterol because it absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver, which flushes it from the body. With HDL (good) cholesterol, higher levels are better. Low HDL cholesterol puts you at higher risk for heart disease. In the average man, HDL cholesterol levels range from 40 to 50 mg/dL. In the average woman, they range from 50 to 60 mg/dL. An HDL cholesterol of 60 mg/dL or higher gives some protection against heart disease. The average level of HDL cholesterol for American adults age 20 and older is 54.3 mg/dL.

Smoking, being overweight and being sedentary can all 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 on most days.

Progesterone, anabolic steroids and male sex hormones (testosterone) also lower HDL cholesterol levels. Female sex hormones raise HDL cholesterol levels.

LDL (BAD) CHOLESTEROL LEVEL	Category
Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
100 to 129 mg/dL	Near or above optimal
130 to 159 mg/dL	Borderline high
160 to 189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL and above	Very high

## LDL

Known as “bad” cholesterol. Having high levels can lead to a buildup of plaque in the arteries and result in heart disease.

Other risk factors for heart disease and stroke help determine what your LDL level should be, as well as the appropriate treatment for you. A healthy level for you may not be healthy for someone else.

Discuss your levels and treatment options with your doctor to get the plan that works for you. The average LDL cholesterol reading for Americans 20 and older is 115.0 mg/dL.



## TRIGLYCERIDE LEVEL

## Category

<b>Less than 150 mg/dL</b>	Normal
<b>150–199 mg/dL</b>	Borderline high
<b>200–499 mg/dL</b>	High
<b>500 mg/dL and above</b>	Very High

## Triglycerides

A type of fat in the blood. Triglycerides are consumed in food, and also can be made by the body.

Many people have high triglyceride levels due to being overweight or obese, physical inactivity, cigarette smoking, excess alcohol consumption and/or a diet very high in carbohydrates. High triglycerides are a lifestyle-related risk factor, but underlying diseases or genetic disorders can also raise triglyceride levels. The average level of triglycerides for American adults age 20 and older is 144.2 mg/dl.

The main therapy to reduce triglyceride levels is to change your lifestyle. This means control your weight, eat a heart-healthy diet, get regular physical activity, avoid tobacco smoke, limit alcohol to one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men, and limit beverages and foods with added sugars. Visit your health care provider to create an action plan that will incorporate all these lifestyle changes. Sometimes, medication is needed in addition to a healthy diet and lifestyle.

A triglyceride level of 150 mg/dL or higher is one of the risk factors of metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome increases the risk for heart disease and other disorders, including diabetes. People with high blood triglycerides usually also have lower HDL cholesterol and a higher risk of heart attack and stroke.

## RECOMMENDED HEALTH VALUES

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### **3. Blood Glucose: The amount of sugar in the blood.**

Elevated blood glucose levels put you at increased risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

The American Diabetes Association suggests the following targets for most nonpregnant adults with diabetes. More or less stringent glycemic goals may be appropriate for each individual.



### GLYCEMIC CONTROL

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<b>A1C</b>	Less than 7.0%
<b>Pre-prandial plasma glucose (before a meal)</b>	70–130 mg/dl (3.9–7.2 mmol/l)
<b>Postprandial plasma glucose (after a meal)</b>	Less than 180 mg/dl (10.0 mmol/l)
<b>Blood pressure</b>	Less than 130/80 mmHg

### **Hyperglycemia**

Hyperglycemia is the technical term for high blood glucose (sugar). High blood glucose happens when the body has too little insulin or when the body can't use insulin properly.

#### **What are the symptoms of hyperglycemia?**

- High levels of sugar in the urine
- Frequent urination
- Increased thirst

### **Hypoglycemia**

Hypoglycemia is the technical term for low blood glucose (sugar). Low blood glucose happens when the body has too much insulin or when the body can't use insulin properly.

#### **What are the symptoms of hypoglycemia?**

The signs and symptoms include the following:

- Shakiness
- Dizziness
- Sweating
- Hunger
- Headache
- Paleness
- Sudden moodiness or behavior changes, such as crying for no apparent reason
- Clumsy or jerky movements
- Seizure
- Difficulty paying attention, or confusion
- Tingling sensations around the mouth

## RECOMMENDED HEALTH VALUES

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### **4. Body Mass Index and Body Fat**

Body Mass Index (BMI) is calculated using a person's height and weight. It is a fairly reliable indicator of body fat for most adults. It is important to know what your BMI does and does not indicate about your weight, health and lifestyle choices. BMI is only one of many factors that you and your health care provider should use in evaluating your health status.



#### **How to determine your BMI**

Your BMI estimates how much you should weigh based on your height. Here are the steps to calculate it:

- Multiply your weight in pounds by 703.
- Divide that answer by your height in inches.
- Divide that answer by your height in inches again.

For example, a woman who weighs 270 pounds and is 68 inches tall has a BMI of 41.0.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention uses BMI to define terms such as “overweight” and “obese”:

- Underweight: BMI below 18.5
- Normal weight: 18.5 to 24.9
- Overweight: 25 to 29.9
- Obese: 30 and above

#### **BMI and Your Health**

People with very low or very high BMIs tend to have the greatest health risks. Even so, BMI is only one factor in your overall health. For example, if your BMI falls into the normal weight category, you will still have a higher risk of health problems if you:

- Smoke cigarettes
- Do not participate in regular physical activity
- Eat lots of nutrient-poor foods with added fat and sugar

If your BMI is in the overweight category, you will have a lower overall health risk if you:

- Get regular physical activity
- Have blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels that are within normal limits.

This means BMI is one aspect of your health to discuss with your health care provider. Together, you can decide if other assessments need to be done and whether lifestyle changes such as eating smarter and moving more will improve your health.

Remember, when determining BMI, one size does not fit all. Other factors such as body building, age and ethnicity are not considered in this equation.

- **Body builders:** Because muscle weighs more than fat, people who are unusually muscular may have a high BMI.
- **Elderly:** In the elderly it is often better to have a BMI between 25 and 27. If you are older than 65, a slightly higher BMI may help protect you from osteoporosis.
- **Children:** Do not use this BMI calculator for evaluating a child. Talk to your pediatrician about the appropriate weight for your child's age.



*Sources: American Dietetic Association. (2012). Understanding Body Mass Index. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2012, from: <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6844>*

*American Dietetic Association. (2012). What Does BMI Mean. Retrieved Jan. 4, 2012, from: <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6442451330&terms=BMI>*