

## YOUR CHOLESTEROL PANEL (LIPID PANEL)

Total cholesterol:

Date of Test:

The goal is usually is to have a total less than less than 200, but in fact the total is not as important as the individual values below.

LDL cholesterol:

The LDL cholesterol (think “L” for “lousy”) is the one that causes atherosclerosis (heart disease and hardening of the arteries). In most cases, you would like this number to be below 100, but the actual amount you can tolerate safely depends on the amount of the HDL cholesterol (think “H” for “healthy”) that you have. One can lower LDL with weight loss and exercise and avoiding “saturated” animal fat.

HDL cholesterol:

An HDL of 40 in a sense will “neutralize” an LDL of 100. With an HDL of 65, you can tolerate an LDL of 140 without undue risk. One can estimate “safe” levels of LDL by starting with HDL and using this to predict a safe level of LDL – e.g., an HDL of 52 (half way between 40 and 65) would allow an LDL of 120 (half way between 100 and 140), and so on. One can raise HDL with exercise, weight loss and to some degree by avoiding sugar and foods that are turned rapidly into sugar (e.g., white carbohydrates).

Triglycerides (TG):

The level should be below 150. TG molecules are fat, but not the fat you eat – that is gone from the blood by twelve hours of fasting, which is why the test is done that way. Triglycerides are made from sugar and other carbohydrates under the influence of insulin. Hence most elevations of TG reflect elevated insulin levels – either diabetes or pre-diabetes (insulin-resistance). One can lower TG with exercise, weight loss, and by avoiding sugar and foods that the body rapidly turns into sugar (e.g., white, low-fiber carbohydrates).