



May 2013 is:

Cholesterol and You Month

At the State Wellness Center and State Employees' Insurance Board (SEIB) Pharmacy



Pharmacy Hours:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday
7:30 am to 5:30 pm
Thursday
9:00 am to 5:30 pm

334-263-8460

rx@alseib.org

Wellness Center Hours:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday
8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Thursday
9:00 am to 5:00 pm

334-263-8470

CHOLESTEROL AND YOU: Know Your Numbers!

High cholesterol is known as a "silent disease." Many people do not realize that their cholesterol levels are too high because high cholesterol alone does not cause symptoms. Too much cholesterol can markedly increase your risk of developing heart disease or having a heart attack or stroke. Heart disease is the #1 killer of men & women in the United States. Of all the important numbers you remember such as your bank numbers, PIN number, etc., knowing these numbers could actually help

save your life!

The State Wellness Center is here to help!

- ❖ If you haven't had lab work recently and are unsure of your cholesterol values, getting your HealthWatch screening is a great way to find out what your cholesterol is!
- ❖ If you do not have a primary care physician and need assistance in managing your cholesterol, we would be happy to help you.

Schedule your **HealthWatch screening** today with the State Wellness Center. Our clinical team will be happy to review your cholesterol results with you and give you tips on how to improve your numbers.

All active employees covered under the State Employee's Health Insurance Plan (Group 13000) are eligible for a wellness premium discount. Every active employee must be screened each year. **Don't delay by waiting until November!** Schedule your appointment online and come visit the State Wellness Center today for your free health screening!

Employees and dependents insured by the SEIB (BCBS Group 13000, 60913, 61013, 72013 and Southland Group 2000) can purchase various products at discounted prices at the SEIB Pharmacy.

NOTE: Only Group 13000 members may purchase **prescription** drugs.

The SEIB Pharmacy offers **FREE** delivery of your prescriptions to your workplace!

*Requests must be received by **3 pm**

Your **insurance card** and a **photo ID** must be presented when purchasing all products and services.

Purchases of over-the-counter items are limited to:
1 box/1 bottle/30-day supply.

What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a wax-like substance that's found in fat particles in your blood. Cholesterol comes from 2 sources, your **body** makes a certain amount and the remainder comes from the **food** you eat. The amount of cholesterol your body makes is influenced by several factors, including genetics. Cholesterol plays an essential role in your body's ability to make healthy cells and maintaining other important functions. However, when too much cholesterol is present, you may develop fatty deposits in your blood vessels. These fatty deposits can obstruct blood flow to important organs such as your heart and brain. In short, high or excess cholesterol can markedly increase your chance of suffering a heart attack, stroke, and developing heart disease in general. Knowing your cholesterol levels is an important part of knowing how healthy your heart is.

What is the difference between "good" and "bad" cholesterol?

Your total cholesterol number is made up of several different components. There are two main types of cholesterol: HDL ("good") and LDL ("bad.") It's important to understand the difference, and to know the levels of "good" and "bad" cholesterol in your blood. Too much "bad" cholesterol or not enough "good" cholesterol can put you at risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. Triglycerides, a form of fat in your blood, make up a third component of total cholesterol. High levels of triglycerides (fat) in your blood can also increase your risk for heart disease and has been linked to the development of Type II Diabetes.

❖ Types of Cholesterol

- **LDL "bad" cholesterol.** In excess, this type of cholesterol can build up on artery walls leading to blockages and heart disease.
- **HDL "good" cholesterol.** Works as a "bad" cholesterol scavenger, picking up excess cholesterol in your blood and taking it back to your liver where it's broken down and disposed of. The higher your HDL level, the less "bad" cholesterol you'll have in your blood.
- **Triglycerides.** A type of "fat" found in your blood. When you eat, calories that are not needed immediately by your body for energy are converted into triglycerides. These triglycerides are stored in your fat cells. If you consistently eat more calories than you burn, especially foods rich in fats & processed carbohydrates, you may develop high triglycerides.

What makes someone more likely to have high cholesterol, which can lead to heart disease?

- ❖ **Smoking.** Smoking cigarettes damages the walls of your vessels, making them more likely to build up fatty deposits. Smoking can also lower your HDL "good" cholesterol levels.
- ❖ **Obesity.** Having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater puts you in the "obese" category and at risk of developing high cholesterol.
- ❖ **Poor diet.**
 - Foods that are high in cholesterol, such as red **meat, egg yolks, and full-fat dairy** products, will increase your total cholesterol.
 - Eating **saturated fat**, which is mostly found in animal products, and **trans-fats**, found in processed cookies and crackers, can also can raise your cholesterol level. You may recognize the phrase: "**partially hydrogenated vegetable oils**" from the boxes of your favorite processed, pre-packaged foods. These are also known as trans fatty acids, which not only lower "good" cholesterol, but also "increase "bad" cholesterol.

- ❖ **Lack of exercise.** Exercise helps increase your body's HDL "good" cholesterol, while lowering your LDL ("bad") cholesterol. Not getting enough exercise puts you at risk of developing high cholesterol.
- ❖ **High blood pressure.** Increased pressure on your artery walls damages your arteries, which can lead to the accumulation of fatty deposits.
- ❖ **Diabetes.** High blood sugar contributes to higher LDL ("bad") cholesterol and lower HDL ("good") cholesterol. High blood sugar also damages the lining of your arteries.
- ❖ **Family history of heart disease.** If a parent or sibling developed heart disease at a young age, this puts you at greater risk of developing high cholesterol & ultimately, heart disease.
- ❖ **Age & Gender.** As we age, levels of total cholesterol in the blood rise. Before menopause, women have lower levels of total cholesterol, than men of their same age. After menopause, however, cholesterol levels (especially "bad" cholesterol levels) start to increase.
- ❖ **Heredity.** Your genes partly determine how much cholesterol your body makes. High blood cholesterol can run in families.

What things can I eat to lower my "bad" cholesterol and increase my "good" cholesterol?

- ❖ **Increase the amount of poly & mono-unsaturated fats in your diet.** Think: avocados, olive oil, canola oil, fish (ie: salmon, trout, tuna, etc.), and peanut butter. Consuming these foods in moderation has proven to increase "good" cholesterol without increasing your total cholesterol.
- ❖ **Increase your soluble fiber intake.** Think: oatmeal, beans, vegetables, and fruits. Aim for at least 2 servings a day to lower your "bad" cholesterol and increase your "good" cholesterol.

How can the clinical team at the State Wellness Center help me understand my cholesterol levels and goals?

Whether you are already taking cholesterol medication or want to know more about your personal risk for developing heart disease, our clinical team at the State Wellness Center is ready to assist you. In addition to checking and explaining your cholesterol values and goals during your annual wellness screening, we also offer targeted management for patients with high cholesterol. We are here to work with you to offer ongoing and individualized guidance, monitoring, and education when it comes to your cholesterol and overall heart health!

References:

1. The American Heart Association : www.heart.org [cited: 19 April 2011].
2. The Mayo Clinic: www.mayoclinic.com [cited: 19 April 2011].
3. Third Report of the Expert Panel on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults (adult treatment panel III) [Internet]. Bethesda, MD: NIH publication no. 01-3760, 2001. [cited 19 April 2011]. Available from: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/atp3_rpt.htm.