

Month's Topic: Cholesterol Education

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HEALTHCARE CLINIC HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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PHARMACY HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

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September is National Cholesterol Education Month!

What is cholesterol, and why does it matter?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance that comes from the foods you eat and is also made by your liver. The two major types of cholesterol are **LDL** and **HDL**. LDL is considered your “bad cholesterol” because it increases your risk of heart disease. HDL is considered your “good cholesterol,” because it is actually good for your heart. When a health care provider tells you that you have high cholesterol, they are usually talking about your **LDL level**.

Your body needs small amounts of cholesterol for essential processes such as making hormones, vitamins, and substances that help with food digestion. However, when you have too much cholesterol, it can build up on your blood vessels in deposits called plaques. This may cut off the blood flow to your limbs and organs such as your heart, or these plaques can break off causing a **heart attack or stroke**.

How do I know if I have high cholesterol?

More than **102 million** Americans have high cholesterol. There are no symptoms of high cholesterol, so many people do not realize they have it, until they experience a heart attack, stroke, or other heart disease. That is why it is so important to get your cholesterol checked! This can be done by a simple blood test at your annual SEIB health screening or by your doctor.

How is high cholesterol treated?

- **Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC):** healthy diet, physical activity, and weight management
- **Medication:** If lifestyle changes are not enough to lower cholesterol, medication may be added. The most commonly prescribed cholesterol-reducing medications are a group of drugs known as “statins.” These drugs work by decreasing cholesterol production in your liver. Statins are very effective at reducing your risk of stroke, heart attack, and other heart disease.



Tobacco Use and Cholesterol:

Smoking tobacco can decrease HDL cholesterol, and lead to higher chance for heart disease and stroke.



Exercise and Cholesterol:

Exercise is a great way to improve cholesterol levels. The American Heart Association recommends at least 40 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise 3 to 4 times per week.

What should I eat for my HDL (good) cholesterol?

Unsaturated fats may help improve blood cholesterol levels. There are two types of unsaturated fat: Polyunsaturated and Monounsaturated. These foods great sources of unsaturated fat:

- Avocados
- Nuts (almonds, walnuts)
- Incorporate vegetable oils (olive, canola) instead of using butter
 - Extra virgin olive is healthier than other kinds of oil.



What should I NOT eat for my LDL (bad) cholesterol

- Fried food
- Processed foods
 - Try to avoid white bread or rice and eat whole grain foods instead.
 - In general, avoid foods that come in a box, bag or can
 - Always read food nutrition labels in order to help make healthy choices



What should I eat for my triglycerides?

- Fish contain lots of omega-3 fatty acids, which have been shown to reduce the amount of triglycerides in the blood stream. Eating these fish is a great way to lower triglyceride levels:
 - Salmon
 - White albacore tuna
 - Trout
 - Herring
 - Mackerel
 - Sardines



Facts and Myths about Cholesterol

MYTH

1. Cholesterol in your diet is bad and should always be avoided.

2. All fat is created equally

3. Cholesterol is bad for you.

FACT

1. Cholesterol in the diet has little effect on the cholesterol in the blood for most people. Saturated and trans fats have a bigger effect on blood levels.

2. Unsaturated fats may help improve blood cholesterol levels. Saturated fats should be limited, and trans fats should be avoided completely. Some foods that contain less than 0.5 g of trans fat per serving may not list it on the label - avoid any food that contains “partially hydrogenated oils”

3. Cholesterol is important for many bodily processes, such as hormone production and digestion. The liver produces most of the cholesterol that your body needs.

References

1. September is National Cholesterol Education Month [Internet]. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; c2014. 2013 Sep 3. [cited 2015 Aug 25]; [about 3 screens]. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/cholesterolawareness/>
2. High Blood Cholesterol: What you need to know [Internet]. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Health and Human Services; c2014. 2005 June. [cited 2015 Aug 25]; [about 2 screens] Available from: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/wyntk.pdf>
3. Cholesterol [Internet]. Dallas, TX: American Heart Association; c2015. [cited 2015 Aug 25]; [about 3 screens] Available from: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/Cholesterol_UCM_001089_SubHomePage.jsp



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State Wellness Center

101 S. Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

All active employees, covered spouses of active employees, non-Medicare retirees and covered non-Medicare spouses of retirees that use the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan (Group 13000) as their primary insurance plan are eligible for a wellness premium discount. Each wellness plan year is November 1 through October 31.

SEIB and Local Government employees along with SEIB retirees are able to use the State Wellness Center Pharmacy. The pharmacy offers various over the counter products at discounted prices and a **free medication delivery service**. Delivery can be provided to the patients located in Montgomery. Please designate which site you would like your medication delivered to, and if it is to your residence someone must be available at the home to receive the delivery.

State Wellness Center Healthcare Clinic

The SEIB clinic has a quality healthcare **TEAM** that includes nurse practitioners, an ambulatory care pharmacist, a physician, and nurses who work closely together to take care of your health and wellness needs.

Services Include:

- Treat minor illnesses
- Provide health education & monitoring
- Check health progress between appointments
- Share information with your physician
- Monitor efficacy & safety of every medication
- Evaluate out of pocket medication expense
- Smoking cessation & weight loss services
- Diabetes education program
- Immunizations & injectable medications
- Develop a personalized medication plan
- Monitor control of chronic illnesses
- Medication check-ups
- Medication therapy management