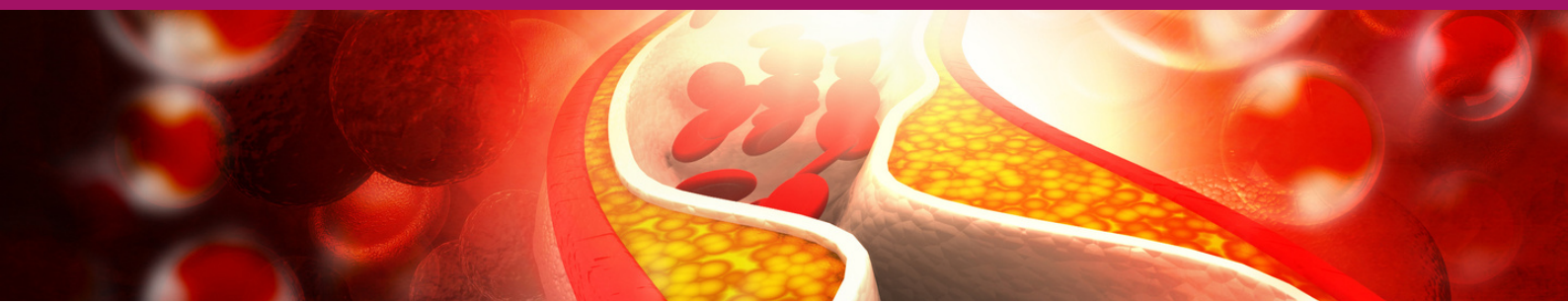
What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a family of fatty substances found in your blood and collectively known as lipoproteins.



Cholesterol is a fatty substance carried in your blood by proteins. When cholesterol and proteins combine, they're called lipoproteins. Everyone has cholesterol and we need a certain amount to stay healthy because it plays an essential role in our body, preserving cell membranes, insulating nerve fibres and producing hormones. However, it is important that cholesterol levels remain within healthy parameters and do not become elevated. The majority of the cholesterol in our body is naturally produced in the liver, with just a small proportion coming from the food we eat. There are different types of cholesterol. High-density lipoproteins or HDL, often called 'good' cholesterol. Non-high-density lipoproteins or non-HDL, including LDL, often called 'bad' cholesterol. And another type of fat called triglycerides. High levels of cholesterol in the blood can be harmful because it sticks to the inside walls of your arteries, and increases your risk factors of circulatory diseases, and metabolic dysregulation (1).

Cholesterol Levels

What are desired cholesterol levels?

Cholesterol levels vary from person to person, but in general the lower the LDL and non-HDL, and higher the HDL, the better. Your blood cholesterol is measured in mmol/L, which stands for millimoles per litre.
NHS healthy parameters are given as (2):

- Total cholesterol - 5 or below
- HDL (good cholesterol) - 1 or above
- LDL (bad cholesterol) - 3 or below
- Non-HDL (bad cholesterol) - 4 or below
- Triglycerides - 2.3 or below

Diet & Nutrition

The foods we eat play an important role in supporting our long-term health and wellbeing.

BANT nutrition practitioners assess and identify potential nutritional imbalances to understand how these may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns.

FOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

1. https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/risk-factors/high-cholesterol
2. High cholesterol - Cholesterol levels - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

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