Cholesterol testing is important, easy — and can save your life.

There are no symptoms for high cholesterol. The only way to know is to get your numbers checked with cholesterol screening.

The CDC’s optimal cholesterol level recommendations for people assigned female at birth:

1. **High cholesterol** = total cholesterol above 200 mg/dL
2. **LDL cholesterol**: about 100 mg/dL
3. **HDL cholesterol**: ≥50 mg/dL
4. **Triglycerides**: <150 mg/dL
5. **Total cholesterol**: about 150 mg/dL

**When to get screened**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20–54</td>
<td>Every 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–65</td>
<td>Every 1–2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>Every year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risk factors for high cholesterol**

- Lack of exercise
- Eating a diet high in saturated and trans fat and sugar
- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Being 40 years or older

**Estrogen affects cholesterol**

Estrogen provides protection against heart disease by lowering blood triglycerides and LDL cholesterol, and increasing HDL cholesterol.

Changing estrogen levels during the menstrual cycle can raise and lower your cholesterol levels.

During perimenopause and menopause, lower amounts of estrogen increase triglycerides, LDL and total cholesterol levels, increasing your risk of heart disease.

High levels of estrogen during pregnancy and with polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) can cause higher LDL and triglycerides.

**How to get screened**

Your healthcare provider (HCP) can give you a cholesterol screening test, also called a lipid panel or lipid profile, by taking a blood sample from you.

You’ll likely be asked to fast or not eat for 12 hours before the test.

**Formula for total cholesterol**

\[
\text{Total cholesterol} = \text{LDL} + \text{HDL} + \frac{1}{5} \times \text{Triglycerides}
\]

Don’t delay — talk to your HCP about cholesterol screening today!