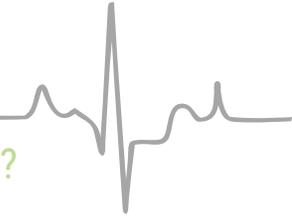




LIPID PANEL

What is it and how do I improve it?



WHAT IS A LIPID PANEL?

A lipid panel is a blood test that measure lipids and fatty substances used as a source of energy by your body. Lipids include cholesterol and triglycerides. The lipid panel can help your healthcare provider determine your risk for heart disease and stroke.

CHOLESTEROL

Cells need cholesterol to function. But excess cholesterol in the blood builds up in blood vessels and may lead to hardening of the arteries, heart disease, and stroke. Cholesterol levels are largely determined by genetics. There are some lifestyle factors that can influence your numbers though. There are two main forms of Cholesterol:

- **High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL)** - is “good” cholesterol. HDL helps keep cholesterol from building up in the arteries. HDL protects against heart disease.
- **Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL)** - is “bad” cholesterol. LDL causes build-up or blockages in arteries, increasing your risk of heart disease and stroke.

TRIGLYCERIDES

Triglycerides may contribute to hardening of the arteries and increase the risk of stroke. Triglyceride levels can be increased by ingesting high amounts of simple sugars, saturated and trans fats. High triglyceride levels are often a sign of other conditions that increase the risk of heart disease, strokes, obesity, and metabolic syndrome - a cluster of conditions that include too much fat around the waist, high blood pressure, high triglycerides, high blood sugar, and abnormal cholesterol levels.

HOW TO LOWER YOUR LDL AND TRIGLYCERIDE NUMBERS

- **Cut the sugar** - intake should be less than 5% of daily calories. The largest source of sugar in the American diet are soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages, one way to restrict your sugar intake is to drink no more than three 12-ounce cans a week.
- **Stock up on fiber** - instead of consuming sugar and other refined carbohydrates, focus on more fiber-rich foods, such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- **Limit fructose** - the best way to decrease the intake of fructose is to avoid table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup.
- **Eat a moderately low-fat diet with healthy fats** - It is important to consider the type of fat that you eat. Cut back on saturated fats found in red meat, poultry fat, butter, cheese, milk, coconut and palm oils. Trans fats such as those in shortening and margarine should be kept to a minimum. These unhealthy fats should be replaced with mono-unsaturated fats such as canola and olive oils.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - Fatty fish such as salmon, herring, sardines, lake trout, and albacore tuna are abundant in omega-3 fatty acids - a type of fat that is actually good for you! If fresh fish is not an option, check with your doctor to see if omega-3 supplements are right for you.

HOW TO RAISE YOUR HDL NUMBERS

- **Exercise** - Many different types of exercise are effective at raising HDL cholesterol, including strength training, high-intensity, and aerobic exercise. Exercise at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- **Quit Smoking** - Beyond heart disease and lung cancer, smoking causes a suppression of HDL cholesterol. Studies have shown no significant difference in HDL levels between former smokers and people who have never smoked. So quit now!
- **Decrease body weight** - If you are currently overweight, by losing even a few pounds can increase your HDL cholesterol numbers. For every 6lbs of weight lost, HDL can increase by 1 mg/dl
- **Eat healthier fats** - Try to incorporate more avocado, olive oil, nuts, and salmon into your diet and decrease the intake of fatty red meat, poultry with skin, cream, butter, and cheese.
- **Reduce refined carbohydrates** - try replacing your white bread and sugar with sprouted breads and fruit.
- **Decrease alcohol consumption** - overdoing it on alcohol consumption has never helped anyone's general status. Moderate to high alcohol consumption has been linked to higher levels of HDL cholesterol.