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WHAT YOUR *NUMBERS* TELL YOU

Doctors use results from the tests and screenings below to help them assess the quality of your health. High numbers (except for HDL cholesterol explained below) can indicate that you are at risk for developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and several forms of cancer. This guide can help you track your numbers. Have tests and screenings on time!

BLOOD GLUCOSE

A blood glucose test measures the amount of sugar in the blood. It is used to help diagnose diabetes and to monitor those who already have diabetes.

Frequency of tests: Age 18 to 44 - If you are overweight and have other risk factors, as directed by doctor. Age 45 and over - Every 3 years or as directed by doctor.

Blood Glucose Ranges:

Less than 100 mg/dL	Normal
100-125 mg/dL	Impaired/Pre-diabetes
126 or higher	Diabetes

BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure readings can vary greatly depending on when and where you take them and the type of monitor used. Alert your doctor if your readings are consistently over 140/90.

Frequency of readings: Age 20 & over - Every 1 to 2 years, more frequently if over 140/90 or as directed by doctor.

Blood Pressure Ranges:

Less than 120/80	Optimal
120-139/80-89	Prehypertension (at increased risk for developing high blood pressure)
140/90 or higher	High Blood Pressure

CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that can clog arteries, leading to heart disease. Cholesterol tests check the levels of your total blood cholesterol, LDL, HDL, and triglycerides.

Frequency of tests: Age 20 & over - Every 5 years or as directed by doctor.

Total Blood Cholesterol:

Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200-239 mg/dL	Borderline High
240 mg/dL or higher	High

LDL (Your actual LDL goal depends on your other heart disease risk factors. Talk to your doctor.):

Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
100-129 mg/dL	Near/Above Optimal
130-159 mg/dL	Borderline High
160-189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL or higher	Very High

HDL: Less than 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women increases the risk for heart disease. An HDL level of 60 mg/dL or more helps lower your risk for heart disease.

Triglycerides:

Less than 150 mg/dL	Normal
150-199 mg/dL	Borderline High
200-499 mg/dL	High
500 mg/dL or higher	Very High

BODY COMPOSITION

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of your weight relative to your height. Your waist measurement indicates abdominal fat. In combination, these numbers indicate whether you are overweight or obese and at risk for a variety of health problems.

BMI Levels: Below 18.5 = Underweight; 18.5-24.9 = Normal; 25.0-29.9 = Overweight; 30.0 and over = Obese. (To calculate your BMI, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi)

Waist Measurement: For men, over 40"; for women, over 35" indicates increased risk for weight-related problems.

Important Information to Improve Your Health

Tips for Exercise Success TIPS FOR EXERCISE SUCCESS

- Choose activities that are fun, not exhausting. Add variety.
- Wear comfortable, properly fitted footwear and comfortable, loose-fitting clothing appropriate for the weather and activity.
- Find a convenient time and place to do activities. Try to make exercise a habit, but be flexible.
- Use music to keep you entertained.
- Don't overdo it. Do low-to-moderate level activities, especially at first. You can slowly increase the duration and intensity of your activities as you become more fit. Over time, work up to exercising on most days of the week for 30 to 60 minutes.
- Keep a record of your activities. Reward yourself at special milestones. Nothing motivates like success!
- If you've been sedentary for a long time, are overweight, have high risk of coronary heart disease or some other chronic health problem, see your doctor for a medical evaluation before beginning a physical activity program.

Folate Lowers High Blood Pressure Risk for Women

Folate, a vitamin already known for its power to prevent birth defects, also appears to reduce the risk of high blood pressure for women both young and old.

New research shows that young women who consumed more than 800 micrograms of folate a day – about the amount found in two multivitamins – reduced their risk of developing high blood pressure by nearly a third compared to those who had less than 200 micrograms a day. Folate also reduced the risk of high blood pressure in older women, but to a lesser degree, the study found. The study isn't proof-positive that high folate intake prevents high blood pressure, and more studies will be needed to confirm the finding.

This study evaluated 150,000+ women, following them over eight years. One group included 62,260 women from the Nurses' Health Study I, aged 43 to 70. The other included 93,034 women from the Nurses' Health Study II, aged 26 to 46. The women answered questions about their food intake at the start and then every four years. They reported any physician-diagnosed high blood pressure every two years during the eight-year follow-up period.

Among the younger women who took more than 800 micrograms of folate a day, there was a 29 percent reduction in risk in high blood pressure, compared to those who consumed less than 200 micrograms a day. Older women who took more than 800 micrograms daily had a 13 percent reduction in risk compared to those who took less than 200 micrograms. There also was a somewhat decreased risk in those who took 400 to 600 micrograms, compared to those who took in under 200, but the risk reduction wasn't statistically significant.

Folate is a B vitamin that is found naturally in leafy green vegetables such as spinach and turnip greens, fruits, dried beans, and peas. To consume 800 micrograms a day, you would need to take a multivitamin plus eat three quarters of a cup of breakfast cereal fortified with 400 micrograms of folate, or other foods. A half cup of spinach, for instance, has 100 micrograms, and three ounces of beef liver has 185 micrograms.

To learn more about folate and other dietary supplements, visit the National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements at <http://dietary-supplements.info.nih.gov>