

# Does your cholesterol pass the NEW test?

What your doctor may ask about your cholesterol at your next visit:

Many Americans take medications for cholesterol levels that are too high (hyperlipidemia). A new set of guidelines were recently released outlining a new approach to the treatment of high cholesterol. What does that mean for you? It means your doctor will likely be asking you a few additional questions the next time you visit to determine if your current therapy should be adjusted or if you may need treatment.

Some things to expect your doctor to do or ask:

- Check your blood pressure
- Check your cholesterol
- Are you taking medications for your blood pressure?
- Do you have diabetes?
- What is your age / gender / race?
- Do you smoke?

These questions will help your doctor determine your 10-year risk of ASCVD (atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease) more commonly referred to as heart disease.

Who needs medication according to the new guidelines:

- Individuals with a LDL greater than 190 mg/dL
- Individuals with a greater than 7.5% risk of a cardiac event occurring in the next ten years as determined by the questions and tests above.
- Diabetic patients with LDL greater than 70 mg/dL
- Prior ASCVD (atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease) or heart disease

The good news:

The good news for patients currently on cholesterol medications known as “statins” your treatment may not change dramatically. The new guidelines primary focus on the use of “statin” drug to decrease the risk associated with high cholesterol levels. The guidelines also did not recommend a “treat to goal” approach so you no longer have to worry about your cholesterol “not meeting goal levels”. This means the use of multiple medications to achieve a target goal may diminish from practice. The determination of treatment success is now measured by the percent reduction of your LDL (bad cholesterol). Depending on your treatment the “goal” would be to reduce your LDL by 30-50% without inducing side-effects. Changing the goals of treatment will affect how your doctor follows up with you and how the conversation about cholesterol takes place. In the end the desired effect is the same to help you live a longer, happier life.