Tri-City Pediatric Cardiology, P.C.

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Understanding My Cholesterol Test

Why do we test for Cholesterol?

We all need some fats and cholesterol to have a well-functioning body. However when we have too much around it begins to store itself places like our blood vessels. Over years this causes our blood vessels to thicken and block blood flow, leading to heart disease, heart attack, and stroke as an adult.

Your blood test may be fasting or non-fasting. **To be fasting we recommend you be 8-12 hours with nothing to eat and only water to drink.** It is simplest to get fasting labs done first thing in the morning.

Why do children need to get tested for cholesterol?

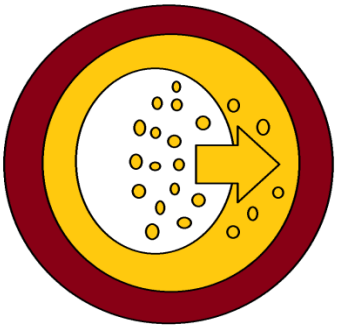
A significant amount of cholesterol disease begins in childhood; **about 1 in 250 children will have significantly high cholesterol.** Since children don't have symptoms, routine testing is the best way to find at risk children. By making the diagnosis we can suggest changes to diet and lifestyle that may help, and rarely if needed we can consider medication.

A great number of children have <u>never</u> been evaluated for cholesterol disease. Ask your doctor if your family has.

How do I understand my results and what is normal?

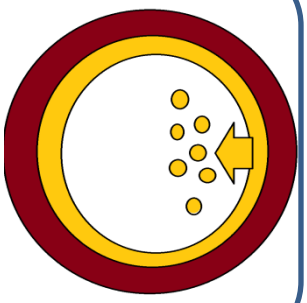
Total Cholesterol: This is simply the total amount of cholesterol in the blood. **This number alone is not very useful.** It is more important to know how much of that is "Good" vs. "Bad".

Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL): Think of this as the "Bad" cholesterol you have. LDL has the job of being the primary mover of our cholesterol around the body. When it is overworked with too much cholesterol that is when it will deposit it in places like the walls of our blood vessels. You may see reports where this can't be calculated and that is usually because the TG level was too high. **We typically want LDL to be low.**



Triglycerides (TG): These are the fats in our blood. Like cholesterol if these levels are too high it can also create the same issues narrowing your blood vessels. This can be just as important as the "Bad" cholesterol level. Additionally when TGs are high they make the HDL "Good" cholesterol lower, making them harmful in another way. **We typically want TG to be low.**

High Density Lipoprotein (HDL): This can be thought of the amount of "Good" cholesterol you have. HDL has the job of recycling cholesterol that isn't used so it helps to clear it from the blood vessel walls. **We <u>don't</u> want HDL to be low**.



	Normal	Abnormal
LDL	<100	>130
TG < 9 years old	<75	>100
TG > 9 years old	<100	>130
HDL	>45	<40