

## Health Watch -- Getting Cholesterol Lower (Part 1)

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Think your cholesterol is low enough? Maybe not, according to updated guidelines.

One of the biggest risk factors for heart disease, heart attack and stroke is high blood cholesterol. The National Cholesterol Education Program recently issued new guidelines for lowering blood cholesterol levels in people with certain risk factors. The new guidelines suggest even more aggressive treatment in patients who are considered to be at high risk.

[Dr. Scott Grundy](#), director of the Center for Human Nutrition at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, says the new guidelines are based on results of multiple clinical trials. The new guidelines update those issued in 2001. Dr. Grundy was chair of the panel that issued the 2001 guidelines that reaffirmed a report first published in 1988.

The new guidelines break down the groups of people considered to need extra intervention into risk categories. People considered at high risk are those who have already had a heart attack, who have chest pain, who have had bypass surgery or angioplasty, who have diabetes or who have other risk factors that raise their chances by about 20 percent of having a heart attack within the next 10 years.

The previous guidelines called for cholesterol-lowering drugs and dietary changes to lower cholesterol for these people to under 100 milligrams per deciliter. The new guidelines call for even more aggressive treatment for patients considered to be at very high risk.

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*Health Watch is heard Monday through Friday nationwide on the "Stardust" format of ABC Satellite Radio. Call your local radio station and ask if they carry the program.*