

## Health Watch -- Getting Cholesterol Lower (Part 2)

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Your cholesterol may not be low enough, if you have certain risk factors.

Lowering blood cholesterol can do a lot for preventing heart attacks and strokes. The National Cholesterol Education Program former guidelines called for people at high risk for heart disease to lower their cholesterol levels to 100 milligrams per deciliter, using a combination of diet and medication.

Based on recent research, the new guidelines break out an even higher-risk group. Patients are considered at very high risk if they have cardiovascular disease plus diabetes, if they smoke, if they have poorly controlled high blood pressure, if they've had a heart attack recently, or if they have the metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a group of risk factors including high triglyceride levels, high cholesterol, low levels of good cholesterol, high blood glucose and a tendency to form blood clots. These patients should lower cholesterol to under 70 milligrams per deciliter, according to the new guidelines.

While the guidelines recommend statin drugs for lowering cholesterol, [Dr. Scott Grundy](#), director of the Center for Human Nutrition at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, says lifestyle changes are also essential. Eat a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet, add fiber to the diet, exercise and lose weight to get the most out of a cholesterol-lowering program.

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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.*