



# StayHealthy

Health Information from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York

## Know Your Numbers for a Healthy Heart

A healthy heart starts with knowing some important numbers that are used to assess your health and risk for disease. See your doctor regularly to get these tests and keep your heart strong and healthy.

### Body Test Goals

#### 120/80 or lower blood pressure

If blood pressure is too high, the heart works harder and there is increased pressure on all the blood vessels. People with high blood pressure usually do not feel any symptoms. High blood pressure can be treated and controlled with medication, diet changes and regular exercise.



#### 200 mg/dL or less cholesterol levels (combined LDL and HDL)

Cholesterol is produced by your body and also comes from the foods you eat. A blood screening will show both LDL (bad) cholesterol and HDL (good) cholesterol. Strive to increase HDL and reduce LDL with a low-fat diet and regular exercise.



#### 150 mg/dL blood or lower triglyceride level

Triglycerides are blood fats that can increase with aging and weight gain. Reducing body weight and making certain changes to diet are necessary for people with higher triglyceride levels.



#### 25 or less body mass index (BMI)

BMI is calculated from an individual's height and weight and can help determine whether a person is at a healthy weight. Visit the American Heart Association website ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)) to learn more about BMI and how to calculate it.



#### 35 inches or less waist measurement (women)

#### 40 inches or less waist measurement (men)

If you carry more fat around your waist, you are more likely to develop health problems. To measure your waist, place a tape measure around your bare abdomen just above your hipbone. Be sure that the tape is snug, but not compressing your skin.



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## Know Your Numbers for a Healthy Heart

Be proactive and make daily lifestyle choices to keep your heart strong, lower your risk of disease and live a healthy, full life.

### Daily Lifestyle Goals

#### 30 minutes of exercise

Walking or other moderate exercise for 30 minutes a day is proven to reduce health risks and improve heart function.



#### 2,000 total calories with low fats

Choose fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat proteins and foods with unsaturated fats or those that are trans-fat free. Consume no more than 2 grams of trans fats and 20 grams of saturated fat per day. Foods high in trans fats include doughnuts, pastries, cookies, crackers, muffins, bacon and pizza dough.



#### 1,500 mg or less sodium (salt)

Salt can cause your body to retain excess water, leading to high blood pressure. Low-salt foods contain 140 mg or less per serving. Avoid foods high in salt, such as processed foods, smoked meats, potato chips, soy sauce, canned goods, ketchup and fast foods.



#### 6-8 glasses of fluid

Water is essential for keeping your body working normally so stay hydrated. You may not always feel thirsty when you are dehydrated. Drink water or eat fruits and vegetables high in water content and avoid or limit coffee, tea, alcohol and soda with caffeine.



#### 7 hours of sleep

Getting a good night's sleep contributes to overall health, decreasing stress levels and giving you energy.



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