

## Which tests to get?

How much do you need to know about your levels of cholesterol and other blood components to understand your risk of heart disease and how to lower it? That depends on several factors. For some people, a basic cholesterol screening will suffice. Others will want to investigate further. Use this chart as a general guide to help you determine which blood tests you may need.

Test	Who should have it	Are more tests needed?
<p><b>Routine cholesterol screening</b></p> <p>This test includes total cholesterol and HDL counts.</p>	<p>Every healthy adult 20 years of age and older, at least once every five years.</p>	<p><b>No</b> If there's no obvious reason to suspect an increased risk of heart disease (such as a family history of heart disease), and the results are normal, no further testing should be required.</p> <p><b>Yes</b> If the results are abnormal, or if they are normal but there are other reasons to suspect an increased risk, you should have a complete lipid profile.</p>
<p><b>Complete lipid profile</b></p> <p>This test includes counts for HDL, LDL and triglycerides.</p>	<p>People with abnormalities on routine cholesterol screening; those at increased risk of heart disease for other reasons and those being treated for any lipid disorder.</p>	<p><b>No</b> If the results explain your apparent heart disease risk and are adequate to guide any treatment decisions, no further testing should be required.</p> <p><b>Yes</b> If you are at above-average risk for heart disease (for instance, due to a strong family history of CVD) and your results are either normal or insufficiently abnormal to explain your personal risk, you should have additional testing to rule out other, more subtle risk factors.</p>
<p><b>Additional tests</b></p> <p>Other tests measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apolipoprotein A</li> <li>● Apolipoprotein B</li> <li>● Apolipoprotein E pattern</li> <li>● Lipoprotein (a)</li> <li>● Homocysteine</li> <li>● LDL subtypes (e.g. small, dense LDL)</li> <li>● C-reactive protein</li> <li>● Oxidative burden and anti-oxidant capacity</li> <li>● Fibrinogen</li> <li>● Uric acid</li> </ul>	<p>Specialised testing is warranted when heart disease, or apparent risk for heart disease, is not fully explained by a complete lipid profile (for instance if you have a strong family history of heart disease and yet your lipid levels are relatively normal) or whenever more guidance for treatment is required.</p>	<p>Under fairly unusual circumstances, such as when heart disease or heart disease risk factors don't respond as expected to therapy, more elaborate testing may be suggested by a specialist.</p>