

Americans cholesterol screening rates too low

By ACSH Staff — November 1, 2013



[1]High blood cholesterol levels are known risk factors for

cardiovascular disease (CVD), and heart disease is the number one killer of Americans. One might think that, given this widely-known information, people would be good about having their cholesterol levels checked regularly. After all, there are effective drugs (statins) that can lower LDL or bad cholesterol levels and thus decrease the risk of CVD. Unfortunately, [according to the CDC](#) [2], the rate of screening for high cholesterol has stalled at slightly under 70 percent.

The goal of the Healthy People 2020 is to have at least 82.5 percent of Americans screened for high cholesterol levels a goal that obviously is not being met.

The news is not all bad, however, as between 1999 and 2010 the percent of American adults with high total cholesterol levels dropped from 18 to 13 percent. But the percent of adults with high LDL cholesterol has remained at about 34 percent for the last decade. The percent of American adults with high LDL who are being treated rose from 28 percent in 1999-2002 to 48 percent in 2005-2008 a hopeful trend.

More good news is that the percentage of Americans with low levels of HDL good cholesterol dropped from about 37 to 17 percent between 2009-2010 and 2011-2012. Although a low level of LDL cholesterol is considered beneficial, a high level of HDL cholesterol is thought to protect against CVD.

Thus the news about these important risk factors is decidedly mixed. ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross thinks While the news about cholesterol levels and treatment is positive in some respects, we should encourage more Americans to get screened. There's no good reason why those who have high LDL cholesterol should not be treated and lower their risks of CVD.

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2013/11/01/americans-cholesterol-screening-rates-low>
Links

[1] <http://acsh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/heart-beat.jpg>

[2] <http://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/facts.htm>