

# High Cholesterol Fact Sheet

## What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fat-like, waxy substance produced by the liver. It's good for your health, but your body makes all the cholesterol it needs to perform its important jobs like making hormones and digesting fatty foods. Therefore, experts recommend eating the least amount of cholesterol as possible.<sup>1</sup>

High cholesterol is total blood cholesterol greater than or equal to **200 mg/dL**.<sup>1</sup>

Total blood cholesterol is calculated by adding **LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, HDL (“good”) cholesterol,** and **triglycerides**. High levels of triglycerides added to high LDL cholesterol or low HDL cholesterol levels can increase the risk of heart disease, such as heart attacks and stroke.<sup>1</sup>



**1 in 3 Nebraska adults  
have high cholesterol**

## High Cholesterol in Nebraska

- In 2023, **34.8% of Nebraskans had high cholesterol**. Those most affected were men, non-Hispanic white adults, adults with less than a high school education, rural residents, low-income adults, and adults 65 years and older.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2022, heart attacks contributed to **154.3** deaths per 100,000 Nebraska residents, or **3,804 deaths**. A death rate of 154.3 per 100,000 people ranks **Nebraska as 15th** in the United States.<sup>3</sup>
- From 2019-2021, there were about **4,008 avoidable** heart disease and stroke **deaths** in Nebraska.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2024). About Cholesterol.

<sup>2</sup>United Health Foundation, (2024). Summary of Nebraska.

<sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2022). National Center for Health Statistics.

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2021). Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke.

## What can you do?

High cholesterol is a significant risk factor for heart disease and stroke, which are **2 of the top 5 causes of death** in the United States. However, it's reversible!

You can reduce and manage your cholesterol levels by:

**Limiting alcohol**



**Eating whole foods, such as fruits & vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and limiting unnecessary fats**



**Taking your medications as directed**



**Getting regular physical activity**



**Maintaining a healthy weight**



**Quitting smoking**



**Working with your healthcare team to find what works best for you**



## More Information

For more information about high cholesterol, visit CDC's website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/about/index.html>