

# Re: cholesterol levels and measurements

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- *From:* Joe Doe <None@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Wed, 24 Jan 2007 19:02:13 -0600
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In article <1169682752.251051.283230@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, david\_o\_selznick@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

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My levels, by the way, are 221 in total, 141 for LDL, and 54 for HDL. The specialist made it sound like they were quite dire and really got me jumpy, yet my research showed that they're not THAT bad, and that the ratio for total/HDL is reasonably okay. I'd obviously like to get the LDL levels down, but as I said, I've wondered if the excessive quantities of cholesterol laden food I ate in the last few months of 2006 may have helped set that figure so high.

You previously mentioned you were overweight. That in itself will drive your cholesterol levels up. Your diet will also contribute. Was your blood pressure under control? Being overweight is likely to have raised your blood pressure. The combination of high blood pressure and high cholesterol is bad – vessels (including the coronary arteries) are damaged by high BP which allows cholesterol to infiltrate. Evidence of plaque build up in arteries has been seen in young accident victims and autopsies of young physically fit soldiers. So the process of plaque build up occurs at a very young age and if you had a bad lifestyle it could have progressed. The danger of the plaque generally is not that it will slowly occlude your blood vessel by slow build up till it is blocked (this will be reflected as angina). The real danger is that soft plaque can rupture suddenly and this triggers a clotting response and immediately blocks a blood vessel (this is a heart attack). The purpose of Lipitor if prescribed aggressively is to lower LDL levels to a point that soft plaque is drained of its lipid core lowering the risk of a heart attack. Other people feel it might also exert a positive effect on the endothelium of blood vessels etc.

If you are overweight it is also likely that you were sedentary so that in itself is another risk factor. So you have quite a few – age, weight, cholesterol levels, sedentary lifestyle and ? (diabetes? smoker?...). So just looking at the cholesterol number in isolation and saying it is not that bad is not wise. In several studies LDL levels

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above 70 or so allowed progression of coronary artery disease. So the cutoffs are generous and if they were tighter the entire population would be on Lipitor.

I personally would take the Lipitor etc. for at least 5 years (providing you can tolerate it) and in the mean time work on aggressively lowering your risk factors through lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, etc). I would also pop a baby aspirin (assuming it is not contra indicated for some reason –discuss with your physician). I would make the lifestyle changes the highest priority (that is ultimately what will protect you) but would not sneer at any crutch that medicine offers.

I would discuss all medication concerns with your physician he/she could alter your treatment plan based on any real or imagined potential problem.

Australia may be using moles/L instead of mg/dL.

The necessary conversions can be found here:

[http://www.reducetriglycerides.com/A\\_measurement\\_units.htm](http://www.reducetriglycerides.com/A_measurement_units.htm)

Roland

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