



CARES Connection

A Publication for CARES Members

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what's your numb3r??

We all live by numbers—social security numbers, phone numbers, driver’s license number and on and on, but do you know the numbers regarding your health? Do you know your blood pressure reading or your cholesterol level? You may be able to avoid serious conditions in the future just by paying closer attention to your health today.

Blood Pressure

Blood Pressure is the pressure of the blood against the walls of the arteries. Blood pressure results from two forces—one is created by the heart as it pumps blood into the arteries and through the circulatory system and the other is the force of the arteries as they resist the blood flow. Blood pressure is represented by two numbers. The higher number (systolic) represents the pressure while the heart contracts to pump blood to the body. The lower number (diastolic) number represents the pressure when the heart relaxes between beats. Because high blood pressure or hypertension usually has no symptoms it is called the “silent killer.” Hypertension can cause a stroke, heart attack, congestive heart failure, kidney disease and dementia.

Sources: www.americanheartassociation.org and National Heart Lung, and Blood Institute

Systolic	Diastolic	Measurement
160	100	VERY HIGH (Stage 2 Hypertension)
140	90	HIGH (Stage 1 Hypertension)
120	80	CAUTION (Prehypertension)
		NORMAL (Normal)

Track my Health— Use easy-to-read charts to keep track of your key health measurements such as blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, height and weight by logging on to MyCIGNA.com. Look under **Health Management Resources** and Select the **WebMD Personal Health Manager** to find the **Track My Health** area.

The information in CARES Connection is intended to complement the advice of your health care provider and not to replace it. Before making any changes in your medication, diet or exercise, consult with your health care professional.

CARES Connection is a publication of Collegiate Association REsource of the Southwest, Inc. Send your comments, recommendations, or questions to: connection@caresbenefits.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that your CARES health plan provides 100% coverage for preventive screenings for high blood pressure and cholesterol?

Know your Cholesterol Levels

Cholesterol levels should be measured at least once every 5 years for everyone over the age of 20. Your total cholesterol is a measure of LDL, HDL and Triglycerides.



Low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL) can build up on the walls of your arteries and increase your chances of getting heart disease. That is why it is referred to as “bad” cholesterol.

High density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL) protects against heart disease by taking the “bad” cholesterol out of your blood and keeping it from building up in your arteries. That is why it is referred to as “good” cholesterol.

Triglycerides are the fats carried in the blood from the food we eat. A high triglyceride level has been linked to the occurrence of coronary artery disease in some people. Excess calories, alcohol or sugar in the body are converted into triglycerides and are stored in fat cells throughout the body. High cholesterol can be lowered through weight loss, regular exercise and changes in what you eat. You should eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, low fat meats and whole grain cereals and breads.

Source: WebMD.com and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Total Cholesterol	
less than 200	Good
200-239	Borderline High
240 and above	High
LDL Cholesterol	
less than 100	Excellent
100-129	Good
130-159	Borderline High
160-189	High
190 and above	Very High
HDL Cholesterol	
60 and above	Optimal; helps to lower risk of heart disease
Less than 50 in women	Low; considered a risk factor for heart disease
Less than 40 in men	Low; considered a risk factor for heart disease
Triglycerides	
Less than 150	Normal
150-199	Borderline High
200-499	High
500 or higher	Very High