

# Riley Speaks

## High Cholesterol and Your Child

Just like adults, children can have high cholesterol. More and more studies show that high cholesterol in kids places them at higher risk for developing heart disease as an adult. As a parent, you can take steps today to reduce your child's risk of developing cardiovascular disease later in life.

### HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS HIGH CHOLESTEROL?

A simple blood test is used to screen for high cholesterol in children. This test, also known as a fasting lipid profile, measures the levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol, HDL ("good") cholesterol, and triglycerides, or blood fats.

Experts at the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend these guidelines for total and "bad" cholesterol levels for children ages 2 to 18.

Classification	Total Cholesterol*	"Bad" or LDL Cholesterol
Acceptable	Less than 170	Less than 110
Borderline	170-199	110-129
High	More than 200	More than 130

\* milligrams per 100 milliliters, or mg/dL

### WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD RECEIVE A CHOLESTEROL SCREENING?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a cholesterol screening for children and adolescents who:

- have a family history of high cholesterol or early heart disease (age 55 or younger for men and age 65 or younger for women),
- are overweight or obese,
- have diabetes, high blood pressure or smoke, or
- have an unknown family medical history.

If your child has any of these risk factors, a first screening is recommended after age 2. If the screening shows an acceptable cholesterol level, your child should be screened again in three to five years.

For kids who are overweight or obese, and have a high blood-fat or triglyceride level or a low level of "good" HDL cholesterol, weight management is the best approach, beginning with an improved diet and increased physical activity.

### WHAT ABOUT MEDICATION?

For children 8 years or older with very high cholesterol levels or high levels with a family history of early heart disease, medication should be considered in consultation with your child's physician.



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### WHAT CAN I DO AS A PARENT?

A healthy lifestyle is key to managing your child's cholesterol, including a balanced diet and physical activity. Ideally, a diet and exercise program should involve the whole family.

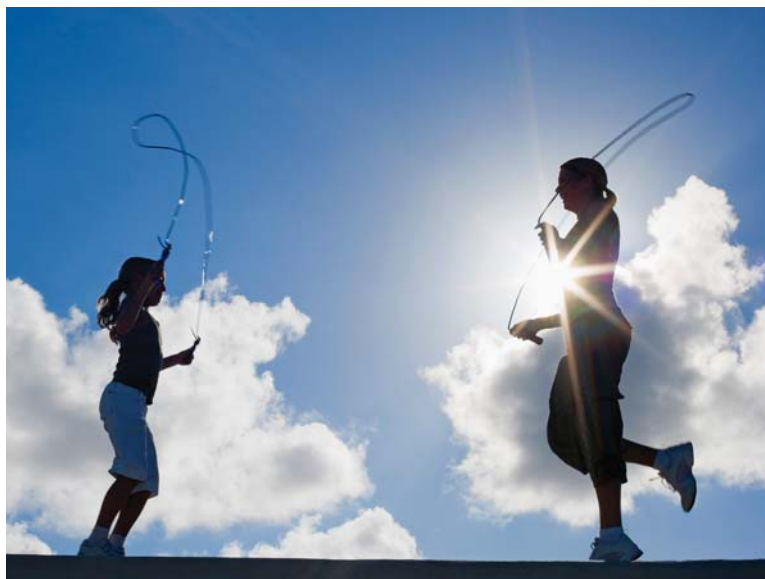
### THE "SKINNY" ON FAT IN YOUR CHILD'S DIET

Follow these guidelines for managing the fat in your child's diet (from ages 2 to 18):

- Fat should supply 30 percent of your child's daily calories.
- Reduce saturated fats to no more than 10 percent of the day's calories (7 percent for children in the high-risk group). Foods high in saturated fat include butter, lunch meats and bacon.
- Limit cholesterol to less than 300 milligrams each day (200 milligrams for high-risk children). Foods high in cholesterol include eggs and high-fat milk, meats and cheese.
- Cut back the amount of fruit juice, sugar-sweetened beverages and foods, and salt your child consumes.
- Check food labels for nutritional information, including cholesterol and saturated fat content.
- Encourage your child to eat more fruits, vegetables, fish, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.

### MAKE EXERCISE A FAMILY AFFAIR

- Walk your family's dog together.
- Climb the stairs whenever possible.
- Park farther away from store entrances and walk.
- Jump rope.
- Ride bikes.
- Go swimming.



For more information, visit [rileyhospital.org](http://rileyhospital.org).



Affiliated with Indiana University School of Medicine, Clarian Health operates Methodist Hospital, Indiana University Hospital and Riley Hospital for Children campuses as a single hospital under Indiana law.

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