

YOUR LIPIDS GOALS

Your lipids levels—a.k.a. *cholesterol* levels, both HDL and LDL—are one of several tools for assessing your risk for and management of cardiovascular disease. Your lipids lab report will also include *triglycerides* levels, key markers for inflammation and potential indicators of heart attack risk. The following guidelines are general lipids goals. *Set your goals with your doctor.*

LIPIDS GOALS

Total: 150 - 200

HDL (good cholesterol): > 55

LDL (bad cholesterol): < 130 (best: < 70)

Triglycerides (inflammation markers): < 150

LIPIDS RATIO: Total ÷ HDL

Lowest risk: < 2.9

Low: 3.0 - 3.6

Moderate: 3.7 - 4.6

High: 4.7 - 5.6

Alarming: > 5.7

Why bother to track your lipids levels instead of relying on medical records?

For many of us, blood tests for lipids levels are ordered by both our attending hospital and by our PCP. Though I tirelessly request that results be sent to both, frequently they do not arrive or are slow in arriving. Furthermore, keeping my own log allows me to notice trends that clinicians may miss, making our discussions more fruitful. **Tip:** recording my lipids ratio (formula above) each time I receive cholesterol results puts my risk in perspective, either calming or alarming me appropriately.

How to set up the LIPIDS section of your MEDICAL NOTEBOOK

Behind a tabbed divider labeled LIPIDS, insert several hole-punched, double-sided copies of the LIPIDS LOG on page 2. Facing those pages, on the backside of the tabbed divider, I paste my goals and ratio formula to help me calculate and interpret the results. Under “Notes” I scribble confessions of holiday excess or meds adjustments or the medical facility that drew my blood.

How long to keep these logs?

I only keep 3 to 4 pages of logs in my MEDICAL NOTEBOOK. Every year or so, I decide to file old logs or to toss them. When I graduated from heart failure to a heart transplant, for example, I tossed all logs for the years of heart failure—a magnificent moment. If cholesterol is bedeviling, I might keep old logs in a file at home for awhile. I toss them when I stabilize.

Please continue to page 2 for your your LIPIDS LOG.

