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High Cholesterol: The Silent Killer

[SYoung](#) Health Guide

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- The old saying "ignorance is bliss" is an appropriate description for many today who suffer from high cholesterol but are (purposefully or not) completely unaware about it. From time to time I will either read or hear about someone who seemed at the peak of their health ending up in a hospital for emergency coronary procedure or, in the worst cases, suddenly dying. High Cholesterol and coronary disease is a non-discriminatory silent killer which won't give you a warning sign until it's almost too late!

Awareness can go a very long way in managing high cholesterol levels and preventing emergency medical procedures. In addition to consuming a healthy diet and leading an active lifestyle, it is recommended that everyone go through a cholesterol blood screen. Without a blood test, it's difficult - if not impossible - to tell if someone is suffering from unhealthy levels of cholesterol or triglycerides. Guidelines recommend that all adults over 20 years of age be screened every 5 years. More frequent screening may be recommended if you have any of the following coronary heart disease risk factors:

- Family history of very high cholesterol
- Premature CHD in a first-degree relative (before age 55 in men; age 65 in women)
- Diabetes
- History of smoking or a current smoking habit
- High blood pressure

Discovering your risk level can be as easy as taking the [Framingham Risk Assessment](#), a quick online quiz that predicts your risk of developing a myocardial infarction (heart attack) or death from coronary disease in the next 10 years. And, being aware of the symptoms of heart trouble (chest discomfort; shortness of breath; discomfort or pain in the upper body; and cold sweats, nausea, or light-headedness) can be the difference between life and death.

The good news is that if you are at risk of coronary heart disease or have high cholesterol there now are appropriate diagnostic measures and interventions to move you toward lower risk no matter what the stage of development.

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