

Know Your Numbers: What They Mean, Why They Matter

LiveLifeWell

One smart choice you can make this fall is to “Know Your Numbers” (height, weight, waist circumference, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose). What do they tell you? Why are they important? What can you do with the results? A lot! Let’s take a closer look.

Height, Weight, Waist Circumference

Height and weight are used to determine your body-mass index (or “BMI”), which provides an estimate of your overall body fat. **Waist circumference** is an indicator of your abdominal fat.

Why do these numbers matter? Because excess weight—even 10 to 20 pounds—can increase your chances of developing heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke, “bad” cholesterol (LDL), certain cancers, diabetes, asthma and arthritis.

Risk for Type 2 Diabetes, Hypertension and Cardiovascular Disease, Based on BMI and Waist Circumference

Body Mass Index (BMI)	Weight Category	Waist Less Than 40" (Men) or 35" (Women)	Waist Equal to or Greater Than 40" (Men) or 35" (Women)
Under 18.5	Underweight	Extreme Risk	Extreme Risk
18.5 – 24.9	Normal	Minimal Risk	Minimal Risk
25.0 – 27.0	Slightly Overweight	Moderate Risk	Medium Risk
27.1 – 29.9	Grossly Overweight	Medium Risk	High Risk
30.0 – 34.9	Obese, class 1	High Risk	Extreme Risk
35.0 or over	Obese, class 2	Extreme Risk	Extreme Risk

Blood Pressure

Your **blood pressure** can indicate if you have “hypertension” (elevated blood pressure). Readings are always stated as “systolic” (the force the heart creates as it pumps blood into the arteries and circulatory system) over “diastolic” (the force the arteries create as they resist blood flow).

Why do these numbers matter? If not treated promptly and properly, hypertension can lead to serious heart disease, stroke, kidney disease or death.

Blood Pressure Reading		Risk for Heart Disease
Systolic	Diastolic	
Under 120	Under 80	Ideal
120-129	80-84	Moderate Risk
130-139	85-89	Medium Risk
140-159	90-99	High Risk
160 or over	100 or over	Extreme Risk

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Cholesterol (Total, Triglycerides, HDL, LDL)

Cholesterol and **triglycerides** are types of fat (“lipids”) the body creates; we also get them from certain foods we eat.

Lipoproteins (“fat proteins”) carry cholesterol and triglycerides throughout the body. Here’s a description of each substance, its function and the recommended target level:

Why do these numbers matter? People with high total and LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and low HDL levels, are at greater risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

Substance	Function	Ideal Level
Total Cholesterol	Helps build cell walls and makes certain vitamins and hormones.	Under 200 mg/dl
Triglycerides	Keep us warm, protect our internal organs and provide energy reserves.	Under 150 mg/dl
LDL (low-density lipoproteins; “bad” cholesterol)	Carries cholesterol and triglycerides to parts of the body that need it; however, too much LDL can turn to plaque, stick to artery walls and create blockages. The <i>lower</i> your LDL level, the better.	Under 100 mg/dl
HDL (high-density lipoproteins; “good” cholesterol)	Gathers plaque from the artery walls and takes it to the liver for disposal. The <i>higher</i> your HDL level, the better.	Over 60 mg/dl

Blood Glucose

A fasting **blood glucose** test is used to determine if you have pre-diabetes or diabetes. It measures the glucose (“sugar”) level in your blood after you’ve gone without eating for at least eight hours.

Why do these numbers matter? Individuals with diabetes are at risk for stroke, heart failure, kidney failure, gum disease, vision loss, nerve damage and other very serious conditions. If your test shows that you have pre-diabetes, you may be able to delay or prevent diabetes with proper exercise and diet.

Glucose Level	Health Risk Level
Under 100	Ideal
100-109	Moderate Risk
110-118	Medium Risk
119-124	High Risk
125 or over	Extreme Risk

LiveLifeWell Tip

You can control or improve your numbers through a combination of diet, exercise, stress reduction and tobacco cessation. Health coaching is an ideal way to get the support and encouragement you need to make necessary changes. After completing the health assessment, if you or your spouse/partner could benefit from one-on-one health coaching, a LiveLifeWell health coach will call you. When that call comes, talk to the coach. Give coaching a try! It’s free, confidential and personalized—everything you need to set goals, stay on track and feel your best.

To learn more about health coaching, call Healthways at **(877) 292-1373**. You can also visit [iLiveLifeWell.com](https://www.ilivelifewell.com) for more information on coaching, as well as the many Abbott-provided resources that can help you LiveLifeWell.