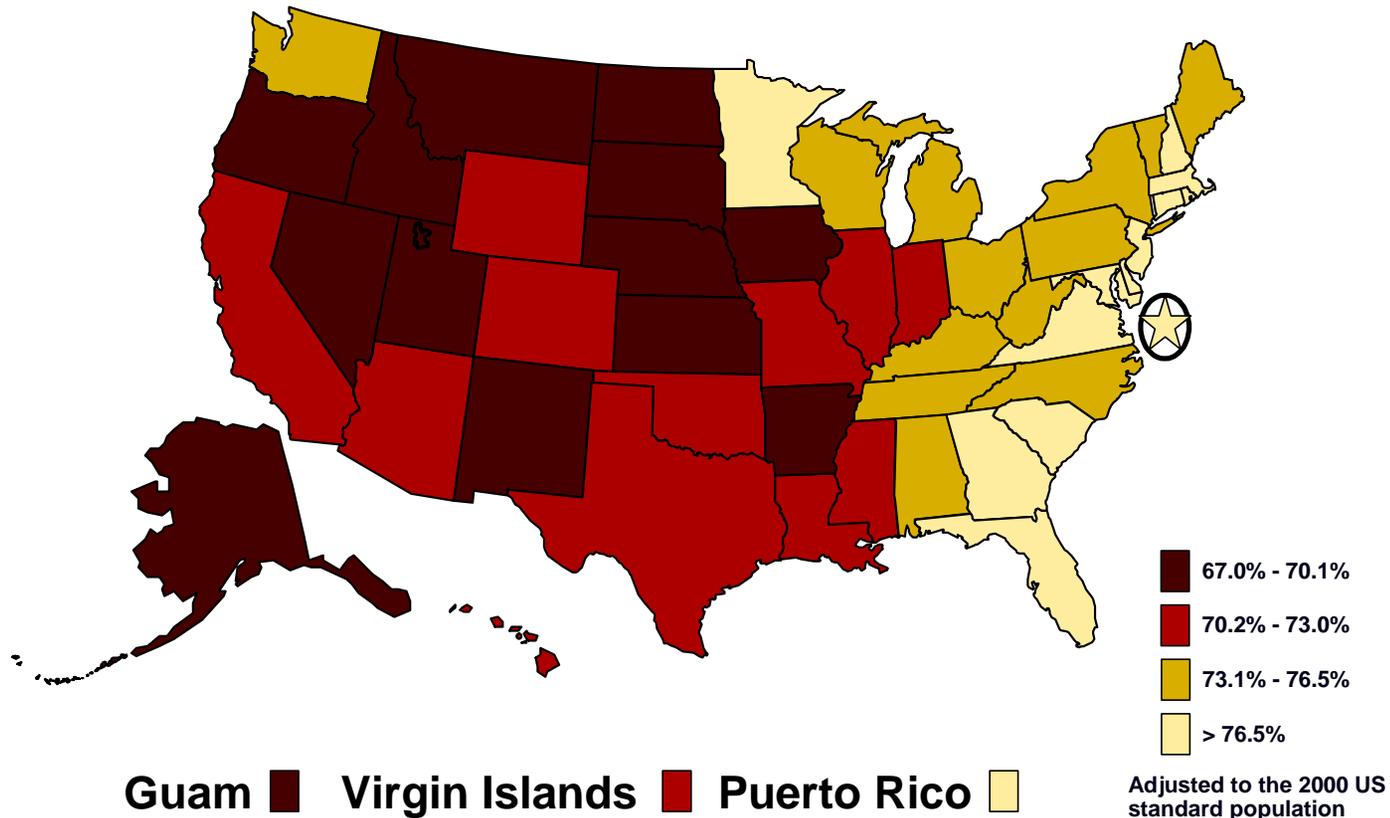




# Facts on Cholesterol

Percent of persons who had their blood cholesterol checked within the prior five years, adults aged 20 years and older, 2003.



<b>67.0% - 70.1%:</b> Alaska, Arkansas, Guam, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah	<b>73.1% - 76.5%:</b> Alabama, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin
<b>70.2% - 73.0%:</b> Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, Virgin Islands, Wyoming	<b>&gt;76.5%:</b> Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia

Source: CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

- Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body and is needed for the body to function normally. Your body makes enough cholesterol for its needs. When there is too much cholesterol in your body—because of diet and the rate at which the cholesterol is processed—it is deposited in arteries, including those of the heart, which can lead to narrowing of the arteries and heart disease.
- An estimated 106.9 million American adults have total blood cholesterol levels of 200 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) and higher, which is above desirable levels. Of these, 37.7 million have levels of 240 mg/dL or higher, which is considered high risk. (Statistics from CDC's National Center for Health Statistics as published by the American Heart Association, Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics — 2005 Update. Dallas, TX: AHA, 2004. <http://www.americanheart.org>\*).
- Studies among people with heart disease have shown that lowering cholesterol can reduce the risk for dying from heart disease, having a nonfatal heart attack, and needing heart bypass surgery or angioplasty.
- Studies among people without heart disease have shown that lowering cholesterol can reduce the risk for developing heart disease, including heart attacks and deaths related to heart disease. This is true for those with high cholesterol levels and even for those with average levels.
- A lipoprotein profile can be done to measure several different kinds of cholesterol as well as triglycerides (another kind of fat found in the blood). Desirable or optimal levels for persons with or without existing heart disease are
  - Total cholesterol: Less than 200 mg/dL.
  - Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol): Less than 100 mg/dL.
  - High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol ("good" cholesterol): 40 mg/dL or higher.
  - Triglycerides: Less than 150 mg/dL.
- The National Cholesterol Education Program recommends that adults have their cholesterol levels checked at least every 5 years.

**CDC's Public Health Efforts:** CDC currently funds health departments in 32 states and the District of Columbia to develop effective strategies to reduce the burden of cardiovascular diseases and related risk factors with an overarching emphasis on heart healthy policies and physical and social environmental changes. Through these state programs, CDC aims to reduce disparities in treatment, risk factors, and disease; delay the onset of disease; postpone death from cardiovascular disease; and reduce disabling conditions. For more information on CDC's Cardiovascular Health State Program, please visit our Web site at [http://www.cdc.gov/cvh/state\\_program/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cvh/state_program/index.htm)

**For More Information:** For more information about cholesterol, visit our Web Site at <http://www.cdc.gov/cvh> or the Web sites of the following CDC partners:

American Heart Association: <http://www.americanheart.org/>\*  
 National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>  
 Third Report of the Expert Panel on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults (Adult Treatment Panel III): <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/index.htm>

\*Links to non-Federal organizations are provided as a service to our users. This link does not constitute an endorsement of this organization by CDC or the Federal Government, and none should be inferred. The CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at this link.