

## NCEP Cholesterol Guidelines 2001

*The National Cholesterol Education Program issues more aggressive guidelines for the prevention and management of high cholesterol in Americans.*

For the first time in nearly a decade, the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) issued updated clinical guidelines for the prevention and management of high cholesterol in adults. Heart disease and diabetes are two of the nation's leading killers, and high cholesterol is a key risk factor in their development.

The guidelines are more aggressive, aimed at expanding the number of Americans treated with diet and cholesterol-lowering medications.

The primary goal of the new NCEP guidelines focuses on lowering LDL "bad" cholesterol, which alone can reduce heart disease risk up to 40%. Other key changes include better identification of individuals at-risk for heart attacks, treating high cholesterol more aggressively for people with diabetes, using a complete blood lipid profile as a first test for high cholesterol, and identifying a "metabolic syndrome" or collection of risk factors that often occur together.

Other changes include increased treatment of high triglycerides and advising against hormone replacement therapy in place of cholesterol-lowering medications.

A new critical level of *less than 40 mg/dL* was set for HDL "good" cholesterol as a significant risk factor. Over 60 mg/dL is *protective* against heart disease.

Finally, the NCEP guidelines emphasize intensified use of nutrition, exercise and weight control in treating high cholesterol. These lifestyle changes have shown to help significantly reduce cholesterol levels and risk of heart disease and diabetes.

The new guidelines target more Americans with high cholesterol – at greatest risk of heart disease and diabetes – to reduce the yearly number of deaths from these diseases.

### *References:*

Internet site: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/new/press/01-05-15.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/new/press/01-05-15.htm). (Accessed July 2001)