

Cholesterol Screening

Objective: *Increase to at least 75% the proportion of adults who have had their blood cholesterol checked within the preceding five years.*

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute regards a blood cholesterol level below 200 mg/dL as desirable, since levels above that are associated with increased rates of coronary heart disease. Yet the mean cholesterol level for Americans is 213 mg/dL and three out of every ten adult citizens of Virginia have not had their blood cholesterol screened within the past five years to determine whether they are at risk. Early detection of high blood cholesterol, more specifically increased levels of low density lipoproteins (LDL) and decreased levels of high density lipoproteins (HDL), is critical because it enables individuals to change to more healthy lifestyles. Although more study is needed, it is thought that most people can lower their high blood cholesterol by reducing their intake of saturated fat, total fat, and dietary cholesterol, and by normalizing their weight and increasing their physical activity. Medications are available for those whose blood cholesterol levels remain significantly elevated despite dietary and lifestyle modifications.

