

**Society for Women’s Health Research
Survey on Women and Their Knowledge About Cholesterol**

***Fact Sheet Comparing Young Adult Women (18-44)
and Older Adult Women (55 and older)***

Key cholesterol information for...

Women 18-44 – You should have your cholesterol checked once every five years beginning at age 20 and your health care provider will advise you if you need more frequent testing.

Women 55 and older – Cholesterol levels naturally rise with age and heart disease most often strikes women after menopause. Cholesterol screening for Medicare eligible patients is covered through Medicare’s preventive services benefits package.

Survey Results: What percentage of respondents ...	Women 18-44	Women 55 and older	All adult women
Know how much they weighed in high school	82.9%	75.4%	79.1%
Know their total cholesterol level	21.1%	43.0%	32.4%
Have never had their cholesterol tested, have not had it tested in the last four years, or don’t know if they’ve ever had it tested	49.7%	19.3%	35.1%
Don’t know or incorrectly guessed how cholesterol level is determined*	25.9%	16.2%	19.9%
Don’t know any the following values: their total cholesterol level, LDL level, HDL level or triglycerides	74.3%	49.7%	62.0%
Know that the healthy range for total cholesterol is less than 200	63.7%	80.0%	72.6%
Incorrectly guessed or did not know what the acceptable range for HDL (good) cholesterol is**	63.1%	61.6%	61.2%
Incorrectly guessed or did not know that HDL is the “good” cholesterol	66.9%	58.4%	61.7%
Incorrectly guessed or did not know what the acceptable range for LDL (bad) cholesterol is***	47.7%	56.6%	50.6%
Incorrectly thinks blood pressure is one of the factors the makes up a person’s total cholesterol level	38.2%	37.2%	37.1%
Is “very actively” or “somewhat actively” trying to manage their cholesterol	48.0%	74.0%	59.8%
Is “very concerned” or “somewhat concerned” that high cholesterol may be a health concern	56.8%	67.3%	62.9%

during their lifetime			
Is “very surprised” or “somewhat surprised” to learn that women can exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet, but still have dangerously high cholesterol levels	35.9%	31.1%	32.9%
Is “very surprised” or “somewhat surprised” to learn that high cholesterol has no symptoms	44.3%	28.4%	36.3%
Is “very surprised” or “somewhat surprised” to learn that cholesterol levels naturally increase with age	44.0%	41.2%	43.5%
Does not believe or does not know that heart disease is the leading cause of death among American women	30.1%	16.6%	23.4%
Is “very surprised” or “somewhat surprised” to learn that heart attacks kill six times as many women as breast cancer	50.7%	36.9%	43.8%
Is “very surprised” or “somewhat surprised” to learn that more women than men die of heart disease each year	41.0%	37.4%	37.6%
* Blood test is the correct answer.			
** For women, an HDL less than 50 is considered a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.			
*** An optimal level of LDL is less than 100.			

Survey methodology: The survey questions were part of OmniTel, a weekly national random digit dialing telephone survey conducted by GfK Custom Research North America of Princeton, N.J., June 29-July 1, 2007. There were 524 adult U.S. women (18 and older) responding to the survey questions, which were asked on behalf of the Society for Women’s Health Research. Support for the Society’s survey questions was provided by Dezenhall Resources.