

Which women should be screened for high cholesterol?

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National guidelines recommend that at-risk women be screened for elevated cholesterol levels to reduce their chances of developing cardiovascular disease. But who is 'at risk?' The results of a study by investigators at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to

estimate the proportion of women young and old who have cholesterol levels that meet the definition of being at-risk are reported in an article in *Journal of Women's Health*.

In "[Cholesterol Screening](#) for Women: Who is 'At Risk?'" Cheryl Robbins, Patricia Dietz, Shanna Cox, and Elena Kuklina, from the CDC, Atlanta, GA, analyzed data for a representative sample of 1,781 U.S. women not previously diagnosed with elevated cholesterol.

More than half (55%) of younger women (ages 20-44 years) and 74.2% of older women (>45 years) were at-risk for high cholesterol as defined by U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidelines. Nearly all of the women in both age groups had at least one risk factor that would make them candidates for cholesterol screening according to the [American Heart Association](#) risk definition. The authors suggest the need for future research to determine whether screening and treatment of young women with [high cholesterol](#) will help to decrease subsequent deaths due to cardiovascular disease.

"The high prevalence of dyslipidemia reported in this study even among younger women is striking and supports the need for increased education about the risks for cardiovascular disease in women," says Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health.

More information: The article is available free on the *Journal of Women's Health* website at <http://www.liebertpub.com/jwh>.

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