

# The Free Lance-Star

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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### Don't misinterpret cholesterol reports

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Don't misinterpret cholesterol reports

The Associated Press recitation of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report is a killer of an article and should be revoked in favor of a healthy discussion of cholesterol ["Cholesterol check: Americans doing OK," Dec. 13].

Thirty years of total cholesterol between 160 and 180 would be acceptable per the CDC numbers, yet deadly for many, including myself, because of a low HDL reading. And those with totals of over 200 need not be alarmed depending on their HDL score.

Numbers worthy of discussion are those involving ratios between HDL and LDL--components of the total. That deserves focus. Those with high HDL counts need not be alarmed by high total cholesterol as long as the ratio between them are within limits.

The article suggests that cholesterol-lowering drugs should be given credit for the reduction in total cholesterol. Fine, but they alone don't increase HDL (except some unmentioned "cocktail" drugs such as Vytorin). Inexpensive supplements such as niacin, Garlique, and CholestOff have just been replaced by prescription fish oil, and I and others share the same testimony: healthy at last.

It is suggested that readers not be lulled to sleep with total cholesterol numbers--they may never wake up.

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