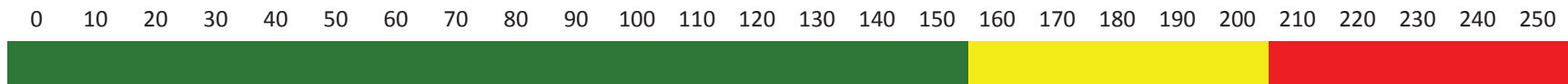


**Cholesterol (total)** is a waxy substance that our cells use to make hormones, Vitamin D, and digestive substances. Our bodies can make all the cholesterol we need. Cholesterol is also found exclusively in animal-based foods. Excess cholesterol in our arteries leads to plaque buildup (atherosclerosis), setting the stage for coronary artery disease (narrowed or blocked arteries).



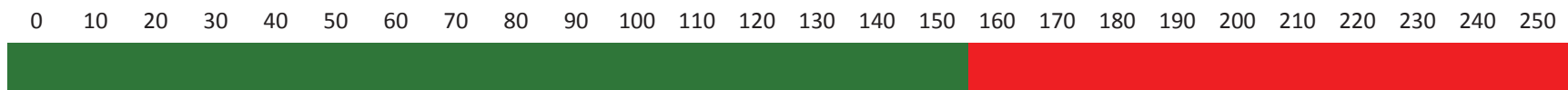
**LDL** ("bad" cholesterol) is the cholesterol that builds up on artery walls and increase our risk of heart disease. High LDL is especially dangerous if you have a disease that may damage the blood vessels (e.g. high blood pressure, diabetes).



**HDL** ("good" cholesterol) protects against heart disease by removing bad cholesterol from the blood and keeping it from building up in the arteries. HDL can be increased with exercise.



**Triglycerides** are a type of fat in your body. Elevated triglycerides may be a risk factor for atherosclerosis. Highly elevated levels may also cause fatty liver disease and pancreatitis. A plant-based diet, which is naturally low in fat, can reduce these.



Beth Motley M.D.  
Family Medicine/Lifestyle Medicine  
Greenville Health System/Univ of South Carolina