

Cholesterol

If you have high cholesterol levels your doctor may recommend changes to your lifestyle. Having high cholesterol puts you at a higher risk for heart disease. A healthy eating pattern along with regular exercise may improve your cholesterol levels and heart health.



Cholesterol is important for your body. Most of your cholesterol is made by your body and is also found in animal-based foods. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans no longer recommends restricting cholesterol-rich foods in the diet and instead encourages people to pay **close attention to the types of fat they are consuming and to increase specific types of fiber.**

Why are fats important?

- Fats provide energy and help absorb nutrients (Vitamins A, D, E, K). They also provide insulation (maintains body temperature) and regulate hormones.
- Fat improves the taste of foods and increases satiety.
- Healthy dietary fat intake contributes to healthy cell membranes which results in improved skin health and better immune function, as well as improved insulin sensitivity.

Saturated Fats

Found primarily in meat, eggs, cheese, milk and butter.

- High intake of these fats has been linked to increased LDL/unhealthy cholesterol levels.
- Listed in grams per serving on the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods. Limit intake to less than 7-10% of calories. (On a 2,000 Calorie diet, that means consuming less than 15-22 g per day)
- Choose lean meats such as poultry and fish and low-fat dairy products.

Trans Fats

Found in commercially processed, packaged foods, fried foods, baked goods, frosting, snack foods, margarine, shortening)

- Trans fats raise LDL cholesterol and decrease HDL/good cholesterol levels.
- AVOID these fats! Look for ZERO grams on Nutrition Facts label and read ingredients list on packaged foods for words such as 'partially hydrogenated oil'

The Dietary Guidelines for American recommend no more than 10% of calories come from saturated fat.

- 22g saturated fat (based on 2000 kcal/day diet)

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 7% of calories from saturated fat.

- 15g saturated fat (based on 2000 kcal/day diet)

Recommendation for total fat is 20-35% of calories: 44-77g total fat (based on 2000 kcal/day diet)

Unsaturated Fats are the heart healthy fats.

- **Monounsaturated Fats:** avocado, nuts, and several oils such as olive, canola, and peanut oils.
- **Polyunsaturated Fats:**
 - **OMEGA-3:** Increase HDL cholesterol and decrease triglycerides blood levels
 - Types and sources of Omega-3 Fatty Acids:
 - DHA/EPA – fatty fish (salmon, tuna, trout, sardines, herring) → 2X/week
 - ALA – flax seeds, chia seeds, canola oil, walnuts
 - **OMEGA-6**
 - Most Americans get plenty of these! Found in safflower, soybean, sunflower, walnut, and corn oils.
 - **Focus on Omega-3: with a goal to decrease the Omega-6:Omega-3 ratio.**
 - **A high Omega-6:Omega-3 ratio can create inflammation and increase chronic disease**

Plan for a Healthy Heart

EAT AT LEAST 5 SERVINGS of fruits and vegetables every day.

- Include one or both at each meal and snacks throughout the day reach this goal
- Creating a colorful plate with produce improves nutrient and antioxidant variety

FOCUS ON FIBER — also known as roughage or bulk. It is a type of carbohydrate found in plant food. Unlike other carbohydrates (such as starch), dietary fiber is bound together in a way that it is not easily digested.

- **Soluble Fiber:** dissolves in water and forms a thick, gel-like substance. Interferes with the absorption of dietary fat and cholesterol thus helping to lower LDL.

- **black beans + kidney beans**
- **avocado**
- **pears**
- **flax seed + sunflower seeds**
- **sweet potato**
- **oats**
- **brussels sprouts**
- **broccoli**
- **barley**
- **lima beans**

- **Insoluble Fiber:** Absorbs liquids and provides “bulk” for stool formation.

- **brown rice**
- **wheat bran**
- **potatoes**
- **whole grain bread**
- **cauliflower**
- **nuts + beans**
- **whole grain pasta**
- **green beans**

BET ON BETA GLUCAN — a type of soluble fiber found in oats, wheat and barley.

- Several studies have found that beta glucan promote heart health by lowering levels of total cholesterol and LDL.
- One study showed consuming 3 grams of beta glucan per day for 8 weeks decreased levels of LDL cholesterol by 15% and reduced total cholesterol by almost 9%.
- 1.25 cups of dry oats = 10g total dietary fiber → 5.8g insoluble and 4.2g soluble fiber (3.6g of beta glucan)

LIMIT SODA, sports drinks, fruit juices, alcohol and other sugar sweetened beverages. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water!

TAKE ACTION WITH EXERCISE — choose an activity you enjoy!

- Walk, bike, swim, dance, play a sport
- Aim for 30-60 minutes of activity daily
- When first starting out, be sure to start slow or break up your exercise in 10-15 minutes sessions.

ADD A REGISTERED DIETITIAN TO YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

- Meeting with an RD can be very beneficial to help navigating your cholesterol
- Offer personally tailored nutrition advice
- Provide evidenced based answers to all your questions
- Help manage diets for one or more chronic diseases

START A NEW JOURNEY TO WELLNESS TODAY!



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