

HEALTHY EATING TO CONTROL BLOOD CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol increases your risk for heart disease and stroke. When there's too much of unhealthy fats in your blood, fatty deposits collect on your arteries. Over time, this causes the arteries to become narrowed and blood flow to the heart can be blocked, leading to heart attacks. While making dietary changes can improve your blood cholesterol, it is important to keep taking your cholesterol medication as prescribed by your physician.

TO LOWER YOUR BLOOD CHOLESTEROL FOLLOW THESE FIVE BASIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Healthy weight:** Maintain a healthy weight or if you are overweight, work on reducing your weight.
2. **Regular activity:** Aim to do at least 30 min. of activity most days. Vigorous activity is especially helpful.
3. **Healthy unsaturated fats, not saturated & trans fats:** Replace saturated fats (*i.e.* meat, chicken skin & dairy) and with unsaturated fats (*i.e.* nuts, avocado, plant-based oil & fatty fish). Avoid all trans fats.
4. **Increase healthy fats while decreasing sugar & refined flour:** Avoid sugar refined carbohydrates as much as possible. Instead emphasize healthy plant-based fats (*i.e.* plant oils, nuts, avocado) and fish fats (*i.e.* salmon).
5. **Increase dietary fiber:** Choose foods high in fiber, especially soluble fiber (*i.e.* oatmeal, fruits, and beans).

MORE DETAILS ON EATING TO LOWER BLOOD CHOLESTEROL...

♥ **Avoid trans fat** which raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol and increase your risk of developing heart disease. Products that contain partially hydrogenated oils contain trans fat. Check for these fats on nutritional labels.

♥ **Choose products low** (less than 5% of the Daily Value listed on food labels) **in saturated fats**. Saturated fats are found in the fat of animal products (especially meat and poultry skin & dairy).

♥ **Unsaturated fats**, such olive oil and other plant oils, nuts, & avocado **improve blood cholesterol**. However, too much fat, even the heart healthy fat, may lead to weight gain.

♥ **Decrease sugar & refined flour**. Avoid sugar and white flour as much as possible. Instead of a diet low in fat, opt for a diet low in carbohydrates, especially processed carbohydrates such as sugar, white rice, and white flour. This is especially important if your triglycerides are elevated.

♥ **Get plenty of omega-3 fatty acids**. These fats, found in oily fish such as salmon, tuna, herring, and mackerel, are beneficial for the heart & help to lower blood triglycerides. Eat fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids at least twice a week or more. Discuss taking a fish oil supplement with your healthcare provider.

♥ **Get plenty of soluble fiber**. Soluble fiber helps to reduce LDL cholesterol. To get enough soluble fiber to improve cholesterol, you will need to deliberately choose foods high in soluble fiber including some fruits: plums, prunes, oranges, grapefruits, pears, strawberries, & apples; grains: oatmeal, oat bran, and cereals with added soluble fiber such as Bran Buds; vegetables: broccoli, carrots, & Brussels sprouts; and beans: chickpeas, lima beans, pinto beans, and kidney beans. Psyllium seeds or a commercial soluble fiber supplement (such as Konsyl, Metamucil, and Fiberall) are an effective way to increase soluble fiber intake.

♥ **Previously it was advised to limit dietary cholesterol**. **Current research finds dietary cholesterol** (found in animal foods, esp. egg yolks, shellfish and meat) **has little effect on blood cholesterol**. Diabetics are still advised to be mindful of cholesterol intake. Discuss these evolving recommendations with your provider.

♥ **Include plant sterols & stanols**. Foods rich in plant sterols, *i.e.* beans, vegetable oils, olives, nuts, seeds, & products with added sterols/stanols (aim for 2-3 grams per day) help to lower blood cholesterol.



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USE THIS TABLE TO HELP YOU MAKE CHOLESTEROL-LOWERING FOOD CHOICES

FOOD GROUP	ALLOWED	USE LESS OFTEN	AVOID
MEATS POULTRY FISH	♥ Lean cuts of skinless poultry ♥ Fish & shellfish	↔ Lean cuts of beef & pork (with fat trimmed off) such as sirloin, chuck, loin, and round. Choose "choice" or "select" grades, not "prime"	☒ Fatty meats or "prime" grades ☒ Processed meats such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, deli meats ☒ Duck & goose
DAIRY	♥ Non-fat or 1% low fat milk, yogurt, ricotta, cottage cheese ♥ Non-fat cheese	↔ Part-skim cheeses ↔ Light or low fat cheeses, sour cream, ricotta ↔ 2% fat milks, yogurts, cottage cheese ↔ Low fat/nonfat frozen yogurt	☒ All full fat dairy (whole milk, full fat yogurt, cheese, sour cream, etc.) ☒ Cream, half-and-half, eggnog, whipped cream ☒ Butter, cream cheese ☒ Creamy sauces & soups ☒ Regular ice cream & milkshakes
EGGS	♥ Egg whites & egg substitutes	↔ Eggs including yokes	☒ Those at high risk for heart disease should limit eggs to 4 or less per week or discuss this with provider
FRUITS VEGGIES	♥ All fruits & vegetables except coconut	↔ Coconut, coconut milk	☒ Fruits/vegetables in creamy
NUTS & SEEDS BEANS	♥ All beans ♥ Most nuts & seeds, nut & seed butters (<i>i.e.</i> peanut butter, almond butter)	↔ Cashew, macadamia nuts, Brazil nuts	☒ Beans prepared with lard ☒ Nuts in chocolate ☒ Peanut butter with partially hydrogenated oil
FATS	♥ Plant oils such as olive, corn, sunflower, soybean, canola, safflower, sesame	↔ Peanut oil ↔ Tub margarine with no partially hydrogenated oil	☒ Butter, ghee, stick margarines ☒ Lard ☒ Coconut, palm, & palm kernel oils
GRAINS	♥ Whole grains such as brown rice, 100% whole wheat products, quinoa, buckwheat, etc. ♥ Oats & barley ♥ 100% Whole grain cereals with 5g or less sugar & at least 5g fiber	♥ Products that are not 100% whole grain but list whole wheat or other whole grains as the first ingredient ♥ Mostly whole grain cereals with 9g or less sugar at least 2g fiber	♥ Refined grains such as white flour & white rice ♥ Cereals high in sugar and low in fiber
SNACKS/ TREATS	♥ Non-fat or 1% fat yogurt ♥ Plain popcorn ♥ Whole grain crackers ♥ Dried fruit	↔ Nonfat frozen yogurt	☒ Movie popcorn ☒ Chocolates ☒ Danishes, donuts, croissants, cookies, cake, pastries, muffins ☒ Crackers with saturated fat ☒ Pork rinds
CONDIMENTS	♥ Mustard, ketchup ♥ Fat-free mayonnaise ♥ Non-creamy dressings with no partially hydrogenated oil	↔ Low-fat mayonnaise ↔ Tub margarine with no partially hydrogenated oil & less than 2gms of saturated fat/serving	☒ Butter, stick margarine ☒ Cream cheese, spreads & dressings with saturated fat ☒ Lard ☒ Regular mayonnaise