

QuickBites



Cholesterol

- The American Heart Association estimates that more than 120 million Americans have unhealthy cholesterol levels, putting them at greater risk for heart attack and stroke.
- Cholesterol is found in every cell in your body.
- When there's too much cholesterol in your blood, you may develop fatty deposits in your blood vessels.
- Eventually the deposits make it difficult for enough blood to flow through your arteries.
- Smart lifestyle choices, including daily exercise, a healthy diet and not smoking, can go a long way to reducing high cholesterol.
- Sometimes medications are needed to maintain a healthy cholesterol level.

This month's newsletter looks at the many healthy food choices that will help you maintain a healthy cholesterol level.

Eating for Healthy Cholesterol

If you have high cholesterol, simple changes to your diet can lower it by 5–10%. That may not sound like much, but that's a bold improvement. A 10% reduction in blood cholesterol will reduce your heart disease risk by about 20%.

See the descriptions below for foods that can help and foods that can hurt. A diet that helps you beat high cholesterol is low in total fat, saturated fat and trans fats, with the right number of calories to maintain a healthy weight. Often, losing even a few pounds makes a difference.

Foods That Help Lower Total Cholesterol

Eat more **fruits and vegetables**. They're low in calories and high in fiber. Strive for at least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables, and more if possible.

Whole grains are rich in fiber – and flavor! The 2010 Dietary Guidelines suggest that at least half of your daily grains be whole grains. These include whole-grain breads, pasta and cereals, as well as brown rice. When you check package labels, look for the word "whole" in the ingredients.

Choose low-fat or **fat-free dairy** foods.

Foods That Help Lower LDL Cholesterol

Eating **fish** once or twice per week can help lower LDL cholesterol. Try salmon or trout, two good sources of heart-protective omega-3 fatty acids.

Oatmeal's and barley's soluble fiber is especially good at lowering high LDL cholesterol.

Walnuts have mostly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. These are the kinds that lower LDL cholesterol. Walnuts also help stop the oxidation that makes LDLs more dangerous. Plus, they contain heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

Flaxseed leads a two-pronged attack against cholesterol. Like walnuts, flaxseed is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help to tackle triglyceride levels. They can also lower your LDL cholesterol. Flax contains fiber that binds to cholesterol and helps lead it out of your body. Sprinkle whole or ground flaxseed on cereals and salads or stir it into your hummus and peanut butter. Or add it to your yogurt-and-fruit mixture rather than the usual granola.

Sterols and stanols are natural substances in plant foods that can prevent some of the cholesterol in the food you eat from being absorbed into the body. Try to get about 2 grams of these per day from fruits, nuts or foods to which they've been added (such as Benecol Spread, Smart Balance HeartRight Spread, and Minute Maid Heart Wise Orange Juice).

Foods to Avoid

Saturated fat raises your LDL cholesterol level more than anything else in your diet. Even more than eating foods that contain cholesterol. This fat is usually solid at room temperature. It is found in foods from animals, such as fatty cuts of meat, poultry with the skin, whole-milk dairy products and lard, as well as in some vegetable oils, including coconut and palm oils. Each of these foods is a significant source of saturated fat – the major dietary culprit in high cholesterol.

- Red meat (high-fat cuts of beef, lamb and pork)
- Bacon, sausage and most deli meats
- Poultry skin
- Stick margarine
- Fast foods (pizza, deep-fried foods, burgers, etc.)
- Canned shortening
- Commercial baked goods such as pastries, donuts, cakes, cookies and pies
- Butter
- Ice cream
- Whole and 2% milk
- Full-fat cheeses

Trans fats are equally bad. To limit them, avoid processed foods made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Thankfully, many manufacturers have cut back on the amount of hydrogenated oils in their processed foods.

Resource: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, www.nhlbi.nih.gov



Medical trials suggest that daily exercise – walking, biking, jogging, swimming – is the best way to raise HDL, the good cholesterol.

Apple-Craisin Crisp

Serves 8

This classic autumn dessert helps maintain a healthy cholesterol level in two ways. Apples are high in soluble fiber, which can lower LDL, the bad cholesterol. Walnuts are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can raise HDL, the good cholesterol.

For best flavor use a mixture of apple varieties. Our favorite combo? Granny Smith or Northern Spy are crisp and tart; Golden Delicious or Honeycrisp add a mellow sweetness; and a McIntosh produces a wonderful apple-y aroma while baking.

INGREDIENTS

No-stick cooking spray

6 tablespoons white whole-wheat or all-purpose flour

1/2 cup (3 1/2 oz/100g) light brown sugar, packed

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon or ginger

1/8 teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons heart-healthy tub margarine such as Benecol or Earth Balance

1/2 cup (2 oz/60 g) walnuts, roughly chopped

5 large apples, peeled and thinly sliced (about 6 cups)

1/2 cup (3 oz/90 g) raisins or craisins

1/4 cup (2 oz/50 g) granulated sugar

1 lemon, scrubbed

NUTRITION INFO PER SERVING

250 Calories	43g Carbohydrate
9g Fat	4g Fiber
3g Saturated fat	35mg Sodium
0g Trans fat	20mb Calcium
1g Protein	



Recipe source: Alere Kitchens

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Place flour, brown sugar, spice and salt in food processor fitted with steel blade. Add chilled margarine and quickly pulse 3 or 4 times until the mixture has a coarse cornmeal texture. Add nuts and pulse until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs, about 5 short bursts. Do not overprocess. Refrigerate mixture while preparing fruit.
3. Place apples, raisins and granulated sugar in a mixing bowl. Grate zest from the lemon and add to the bowl; squeeze the lemon and add juice as well. Toss to mix.
4. Pour the fruit mixture into an 8-inch square (2-liter) baking pan or 9-inch (23-cm) round deep-dish pie plate. Sprinkle the chilled topping over the fruit. Bake for 40 minutes, then increase the oven temperature to 400°F (200°C). Bake until the fruit is bubbling and topping is golden brown, about 5 minutes longer.
5. Serve warm or at room temperature.