



Managing Your Cholesterol

Although some cholesterol is an important part of a healthy body, a cholesterol level that is too high is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, heart attack, stroke, dementia, peripheral artery disease, erectile dysfunction, kidney failure, fatty liver disease and diabetes. Therefore, it is important to educate oneself about the two types of cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL).

Diet changes may lower total cholesterol as much as 5 to 20 percent. Listed below are a few guidelines to follow to help manage cholesterol.

WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

- A variety of deeply colored fruits and vegetables. 4 to 5 servings of each per day.
- A variety of fiber-rich grain products like whole grain breads, cereal, pasta and brown rice. 6 to 8 servings per day with at least half of the servings being whole grains.
- Lean cuts of meat and with all visible fat trimmed off. Keep portion sizes moderate. Choose up to 5 to 6 total ounces per day.
- Nuts, seeds, and legumes (dried beans or peas). 4 to 5 servings per week.
- Skinless white meat; chicken, turkey, fish and meatless entrées more often than red meat.

WHAT SHOULD I LIMIT?

- Limit the amount of cholesterol in your diet. The American Heart Association recommends eating no more than 250-300 milligrams each day.
- Be aware of your fat intake. Fats should not exceed more than 30% of your total daily calories. Only 10% of the fat you eat should be saturated fat.
 - Foods that are high in fat include processed meats like sausage, bologna, salami and hot dogs
 - Fried foods
 - Solid fats like shortening, partially hydrogenated margarine and lard
 - Bakery goods made with egg yolks, saturated fats and Trans fats
 - Whole milk, cream and ice-cream
 - Butter, egg yolks and cheese (and foods made with them)
 - Fatty meats that are not trimmed

WHAT ARE SOME HEALTHY COOKING RECOMMENDATIONS?

- Broil or grill instead of pan-frying
- Use vegetable oil spray to brown or sauté food
- Make recipes or egg dishes with egg whites or egg substitutes, not egg yolks
- Serve smaller portions of higher-fat dishes
- Cut off all visible fat from meat before cooking and remove all the skin off poultry pieces

MANAGING CHOLESTEROL

In many cases, cholesterol can be managed simply by monitoring your lifestyle habits or making a few changes. The following tips are important factors in managing cholesterol.

Reduce excess weight

Losing weight can help reduce LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol. It is especially important for people who have multiple risk factors to lose weight in order to reduce the risk for heart disease.

Exercise

Moderate physical activity for 30 minutes most days of the week. Check with your primary care provider before beginning an exercise program. Exercise goes hand-in-hand with a healthy diet for controlling cholesterol.