

Eating To Lower Your Cholesterol

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WHY LOWER CHOLESTEROL?

You hear it all the time: "Watch your cholesterol!" That's because too much of it is bad for your heart. Cholesterol is a fat-like substance. It can build up in blood vessels and block the flow of blood. That can lead to a heart attack or a stroke. But you can take steps to help your heart!



A diet high in fat can raise blood cholesterol. It helps to cut down on egg yolks, high-fat meats, fried foods, and full-fat milks and cheeses. But food is not the only thing that affects your cholesterol level. It also depends on genes, age, sex, weight, and how active you are.

What You Can Do

Some things can be changed and some can't. You can't change your age, sex, or genes. But you **can** help your heart in other ways.

- If you smoke, quit. That can cut your risk of heart attack in half.
- Eat a diet low in saturated fat and trans fat.
- Eat lots of whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.
- Get to and stay at a healthy weight.
- Get 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Do 10 minutes three times a day if that works better for you.



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WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?

Your cholesterol level is checked by a blood test. In general, your total number should be under 200. If it is 200 or above, your doctor will probably want to know the levels of each kind of cholesterol in your blood. You and your doctor can decide what *your* goals should be.

A DIET THAT HELPS YOUR HEART

If your cholesterol is in the good range, great! Your goal is to keep it that way. Eat a healthy diet. Get regular exercise. Stay at your best weight. That's probably what you have been doing all along.

If your cholesterol is too high, you can help lower it with a diet that is:

<p>Low in saturated fat and trans fat</p>	<p>Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high-fat meats, sauces, and gravies • full-fat milk and cheese • butter (use tub margarine) • deep-fried foods and snacks • store-bought baked goods • solid white shortening
<p>Low in cholesterol</p>	<p>Cut back on foods that come from animals. Avoid egg yolks. Try beans or soy foods instead of meats.</p>
<p>Rich in fiber and whole grains</p>	<p>Eat five or more fruits and veggies each day. Eat whole-wheat breads and pastas, brown rices, and whole-grain cereals.</p>



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Your doctor or dietitian can help you plan a healthy diet to suit your tastes and lifestyle.

WHAT ABOUT PILLS?

Some people try to make these changes and still cannot lower their cholesterol. In those cases, the doctor may prescribe a drug.

It is still important to eat right, exercise, and stay at a healthy weight when taking these drugs. These steps can help you need less medicine.

NOTES: