

Food Choices to Lower Blood Cholesterol...

The First Step

Fruits and vegetables

Eat at least five servings per day. Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, frozen or canned without added fat or sugar. Try to eat a dark green leafy, or deep yellow, vegetable each day.

One serving equals:

- 1/2 cup cooked vegetables
- 1 cup raw vegetables
- 1/2 cup canned or frozen fruit
- 1/2 cup fresh berries or cut-up pieces of larger fruit, such as melons
- 1 small piece of fruit (the size of a tennis ball)

Starches, grains, starchy vegetables and legumes

Eat six to 11 servings per day of whole grain products. The fiber found in oat, brown rice and barley bran, dried beans and some fruits and vegetables has been shown to lower blood cholesterol along with a low-fat diet.

One serving equals:

- 1 small tortilla
- 1 slice of bread, 1 dinner roll or 4 to 5 crackers
- 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta, corn, potatoes, beans, peas or lentils
- 1 ounce of dry cereal or 1/2 cup cooked cereal
- 1/2 English muffin or small bagel
- 1/2 pita bread

Choose low-fat starches

(containing no more than 2 grams of fat per serving)

- Low-fat baked goods, such as angel food cake, ginger snaps, low-fat muffins, yeast breads, bread sticks
- Low-fat snacks, such as pretzels, low-fat crackers, baked chips

Limit high-fat baked goods and snacks

- Starches with added fat, such as granola, potato chips, tortilla chips, french fries and onion rings
- High-fat baked goods, such as pies, cakes, doughnuts, pastries, croissants, muffins, quick breads, high-fat cookies and crackers

Dairy products

Eat at least three servings of non-fat or low-fat dairy products per day.

One serving equals:

- 8 ounces of non-fat milk
- 8 ounces of non-fat yogurt

Choose non-fat (skim) or low-fat (1%) dairy products

- Skim or 1% milk
- Non-fat yogurt

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Use non-fat or low-fat cheese as a substitute for meat

- 1 ounce of cheese *or*
- 1/4 cup cottage cheese

- Low-fat cheese (any cheese with less than 5 grams of fat per ounce) such as low-fat cottage cheese, part skim mozzarella, farmers or string cheese
- Non-fat cheese (any cheese or cottage cheese with less than 1 gram of fat per ounce)

Limit high-fat dairy products

- Regular and 2% milk and milk products, such as regular evaporated milk or yogurt
- Whole milk, processed cheese and natural cheese, such as cheddar, Swiss, Brick, Brie, Monterey Jack, Colby, American, cream cheese
- Rich dairy desserts and condiments, such as ice cream, whipped toppings, sour cream, half-and-half

Meats

Limit intake of cooked lean beef, pork, chicken, turkey or fish to 6 ounces or less each day.

3 ounces of cooked meat = 4 ounces of raw meat.

Two or more servings of fish per week are recommended.

One 2-ounce serving equals:

- 1 small chicken leg or thigh
- 1/2 cup ground or chopped meat or tuna
- 2 slices of sandwich-sized meat

One 3-ounce serving equals:

- 1 medium pork chop
- 1 quarter-pound hamburger
- 1 split chicken breast
- 1 unbreaded fish fillet
- Cooked meat the size of a deck of cards

Choose lean meats

(containing no more than 3 grams of fat per ounce)

- Chicken, turkey, fish and shellfish (without skin or added oil)
- Lean, trimmed cuts of beef, pork and lamb, such as:
 - Beef/veal: tenderloin, sirloin tip, round steak, ground round, rump roast, flank steak
 - Pork: loin chops, tenderloin, center cut ham, Canadian bacon
 - Lamb: loin or leg roasts, chops

Limit high-fat, high-cholesterol meats

- High-fat, processed meats, such as bacon, bologna, salami, sausage, hot dogs
- High-fat cuts of beef, pork and lamb, such as prime grade steaks, roasts, ribs, veal cutlets
- High-cholesterol meats, such as liver, sweetbreads, kidneys, brains

Eggs

Limit egg yolks (including those used in baked goods and cooking) to no more than two per week. One egg yolk has 5 grams of fat.

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Fats and oils

Limit all added fats, especially sources of saturated fat. Depending on your caloric intake, eat no more than three to eight servings per day.

One serving contains 4 to 5 grams of fat. Added fat includes fat used in cooking, baking and contained in convenience foods. Limit fat intake carefully to avoid extra calories.

One serving equals:

- 1 teaspoon butter, margarine or oil
- 2 teaspoons salad dressing or 2 tablespoons light salad dressing
- 2 teaspoons peanut butter, nuts or seeds
- 5 large olives (black or green)
- 1/8 medium avocado

Choose unsaturated fats

When selecting dietary fat, use the following in the quantities suggested above:

- Unsaturated oils, such as canola, olive, corn, safflower, sesame, soybean and sunflower
- Tub margarine made with the unsaturated oils listed above. The softer the margarine, the less hydrogenated it is. Avoid trans fats.
- Nuts, seeds, olives, avocados or natural peanut butter
- Salad dressing or mayonnaise made with unsaturated vegetable oil. Use reduced fat versions of these products.

Limit saturated fats

- Saturated fats and oils, such as butter, lard, bacon fat, coconut oil, palm oil
- Hydrogenated oil found in shortening, stick margarines, salad dressings and peanut butter

NOTE: These recommendations are not intended for children under age 2. Recommended limits are based on typical calorie needs for adults. Individuals with higher calorie needs may have more unsaturated fats and oils, and should increase their intake of fruits, vegetables and starches.

Promoting heart health

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the leading cause of death in the United States. Controllable risk factors strongly associated with CHD include high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and cigarette smoking. Reducing any of these factors will reduce your risk of heart disease. Other associated risk factors include age, family history, diabetes and obesity.

In most cases, the higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your chances of developing heart disease. By learning to eat certain foods more often and other foods less often, you may be able to lower your blood cholesterol level—and reduce your risk of heart disease.

What your number means

Your cholesterol number shows the level of cholesterol in your blood at the time the measurement was taken. This number is one indicator of your risk for heart disease. The following cholesterol classification was established by the National Cholesterol Education Program.

Total blood cholesterol classifications

Less than 200 mg/dlDesirable
200-239 mg/dlBorderline to high
240 mg/dl and aboveHigh

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Eat less fat.

Reducing your total fat intake to 30 percent or less of your calories, and your saturated fat intake to less than seven percent, is a major step in lowering blood cholesterol. Eliminating all fat is not necessary. The chart below gives suggested limits for calorie and fat intake.

Eat less saturated fat.

Saturated fat raises your blood cholesterol more than anything else in your diet. All animal fats and some vegetable fats—coconut oil, palm kernel oil, palm oil and cocoa butter—are high in saturated fat.

Taking the first step

Eat less cholesterol.

Cholesterol found in certain foods also can raise your blood cholesterol level. By eating less fat and limiting foods high in saturated fat, you can reduce your intake of dietary cholesterol. Strive for less than 200 mg daily.

Eat more fiber.

Dietary fiber is the indigestible part of food and is found in plant foods. There are two types of fiber: insoluble and soluble. Insoluble fiber helps keep your intestinal tract healthy and prevents constipation. Soluble fiber helps lower your cholesterol. It is found in dried beans, peas and other legumes, oats and barley, and in certain fruits, such as apples, oranges and grapefruit.

If you are overweight, consider losing a few pounds.

People who are overweight often have high blood cholesterol levels. A weight loss of 10 to 15 pounds can be beneficial. Use the chart below to determine a safe caloric intake for weight loss.

Be active.

Activity plays an important role in promoting heart health. Aerobic activities, such as swimming, biking, jogging and cross-country skiing, are especially beneficial. If you are not exercising now, try walking.

Daily recommendations for calories and fat

To maintain weight

Calories	Grams of fat	Grams of saturated fat
1800-2100	60-70	14-16
2100-2400	70-80	16-19

To lose weight

Calories	Grams of fat	Grams of saturated fat
1200-1500	40-50	9-12
1500-1800	50-60	12-14

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Sample meal plan for 1500 calories

Food choice	Sample selection	Calories	Fat (grams)	Saturated fat (grams)	Fiber (grams)
Breakfast					
1 fruit	1 medium banana	108	0.5	0.2	2.8
1 starch	1 Shredded wheat biscuit	80	0.3	0.0	2.5
1 starch	1 slice multi grain toast	60	0.5	0.0	2.0
1 milk	1 c. skim	85	0.4	0.3	0.0
2 fat	2 tsp. soft margarine	68	7.6	1.2	0
		401	9.3	1.7	7.3
Lunch					
2 oz. meat	2 oz. boneless chicken breast	94	2.0	0.6	0.0
2 starch	2 slices whole wheat bread	123	2.1	0.5	3.5
1 fat	1 tbsp. lite mayo	50	5.0	1.0	0.0
1 vegetable	1 c. raw carrots	52	0.2	0.0	3.6
1 fruit	1 medium apple	81	0.5	0.1	3.7
1 milk	1 c. skim	85	0.4	0.3	0.0
		485	10.2	2.5	10.8
Dinner					
3 oz. meat	3 oz. salmon	154	6.3	1.2	0.0
2 starch	1 medium baked potato	200	0.2	0.0	4.8
2 vegetable	1 c. broccoli	44	0.5	0.1	4.5
1 milk	1 c. skim	85	0.4	0.3	0.0
2 fat	2 tsp. soft margarine	68	7.6	1.2	0.0
		551	15.0	2.8	9.3
Snack					
1 fruit	1 orange	62	0.2	0.0	3.1
	Total	1499	34.7	7.0	30.5

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