

How to Lower Cholesterol

What is Cholesterol?

Your body needs some cholesterol to work properly. But if you have too much in your blood, it can stick to the walls of your arteries and narrow or even block them. This puts you at risk for coronary artery disease and other heart diseases.

Cholesterol travels through the blood on proteins called lipoproteins. One type, LDL is sometimes called the “*bad*” cholesterol. A high LDL level leads to a buildup of cholesterol in your arteries. Another type, HDL is sometimes called “*good*” cholesterol. It carries cholesterol from other parts of your body back to your liver. Then your liver removes the cholesterol from your body.

There are steps that you can take to lower your LDL “*bad*” cholesterol and raise your HDL “*good*” cholesterol. By Keeping your cholesterol levels in range, you can lower your risk of heart diseases.

What are the treatments for high cholesterol?

The main treatments for high cholesterol are lifestyle changes and medications. Have a regular exercise routine. (*Check with your doctor before you start*)

Lifestyle changes to lower cholesterol

Heart-healthy lifestyle changes that can help you lower or control your cholesterol and medicines.

- * **Heart-Healthy Eating.** A heart-health eating plan limits the amount of saturated and trans fats that you eat. It recommends that you eat and drink only enough calories to stay at a healthy weight and avoid weight gain. It encourages you to choose a variety of nutritious foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats.
- * **Weight Management.** If you are overweight, losing weight can help lower LDL “*bad*” cholesterol.
- * **Physical Activity.** Everyone should get regular physical activity. (At least 30 a day minutes on most, if not all, days.)



- * **Managing Stress.** Research has shown that chronic stress can sometimes raise your LDL cholesterol and lower your HDL cholesterol.



- * **Quitting Smoking.** Quitting smoking can raise your HDL cholesterol. Since HDL helps to remove LDL cholesterol from your arteries, having more HDL can help to lower your LDL cholesterol.

Medicines to lower cholesterol

For some people, making lifestyle changes alone does not lower their cholesterol enough. They may also need to take medicines. There are several types of cholesterol-lowering drugs available. They work in different ways and can have different side effects. Talk to your health care provider about which medicine is right for you.

Even if you take medicines to lower your cholesterol, you still need to continue with lifestyle changes.

Supplements to lower cholesterol

Some companies sell supplements that they say can lower cholesterol. Researchers have studied many of these supplements, including red yeast rice, flaxseed, and garlic. At this time, there isn't conclusive evidence that any of them are effective in lowering cholesterol levels. Also, supplements may cause side effects and interactions with medications. Always check your health care provider before you take any supplements.



Choose Low-Cholesterol Heart Healthy Foods

Eating healthy foods can help lower cholesterol. Below are some tips from the different food groups. Take this with you to the store when you shop for food. Or, hang it up in your kitchen as a helpful reminder.

Food Groups	Choose	Go Easy On	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Meat ♥ Poultry ♥ Fish ♥ Dry Beans ♥ Eggs ♥ Nuts (up to 5 ounces of meat poultry, fish / day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Lean cuts of meat ♥ Chicken & turkey without skin ♥ Fish ♥ Egg whites ♥ Beans / Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Shellfish ♥ Duck ♥ Egg yolks ♥ Nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Processed meats, such as bacon & bologna ♥ Hotdogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Milk ♥ Yogurt ♥ Cheese (2 or more servings / day; 3-4 for pregnant or breast-feeding woman)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Fat-free or low-fat dairy products; skim or 1% milk ♥ Cheese with no more than 3 grams of fat per ounce ♥ Low-fat yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ 2% fat milk ♥ Sour cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Whole milk ♥ Swiss, American, Cheddar cheese ♥ Cream Cheese
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Fats ♥ Oils (approximately 5-8 teaspoons / day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Corn ♥ Olive ♥ Canola ♥ Sunflower oils/ Safflowers oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Avocados ♥ Olives ♥ Peanut oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Butter ♥ Lard ♥ Bacon fat ♥ Coconut oil ♥ Solid shortening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Breads ♥ Cereals ♥ Pasta ♥ Rice (6-11 servings / day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Whole-grain breads ♥ Whole-wheat pasta ♥ Whole-grain rice ♥ Plain baked potato 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Granola ♥ Biscuits ♥ Muffins ♥ Cornbread 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Croissants ♥ Pastries ♥ Egg noodles ♥ Doughnuts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Fruits ♥ Vegetables (3-5 servings / day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Fresh ♥ Frozen ♥ Dried fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Canned fruit in syrup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Coconut ♥ Vegetables prepared in butter or cream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Snacks (in Limited amounts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Sorbet ♥ Low-fat frozen ♥ Plain popcorn ♥ Pretzels ♥ Fruits / Vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Homemade cakes, cookies & pies prepared w/ unsaturated oils ♥ Baked Chips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Ice cream ♥ Chocolate ♥ Potato chips ♥ Buttered popcorn