Lower Your Cholesterol With Food

Hyperlipidemia is high cholesterol, or specifically high LDL (or “bad”) cholesterol. Over time, the build-up of LDL cholesterol in your arteries can lead to heart problems.

Current guidelines

Your doctor may prescribe a statin drug to lower your cholesterol if you:

• Have diabetes
• Smoke
• Have hypertension (high blood pressure)
• Have other risks for heart disease

Your diet matters

While newer (2013) guidelines focus heavily on statin drug therapy, it is still important to take control of your diet to lower your LDL cholesterol.

Studies show an improvement in LDL cholesterol of up to 30% (52mg/dL) can be achieved with diet changes.

Classic target lipid levels

Total cholesterol: below 200 mg/dL
Triglycerides: below 150 mg/dL
LDL (bad) cholesterol: below 100 mg/dL
HDL (good) cholesterol: ABOVE 60 mg/dL

Eat plant-based protein

The Portfolio diet is another good diet. It focuses on plant-based protein and emphasizes soluble fiber from oats, barley, psyllium, okra, and eggplant. It substitutes butter with a healthy spread made with plant sterols.

This diet may reduce LDL cholesterol up to 30% (a 52mg/dL decrease)—equivalent to 20mg of lovastin and a low saturated fat diet.

Eat foods rich in fiber

Aim for 20 - 30 grams total fiber in your diet each day. Soluble fiber is best for lowering LDL cholesterol. It dissolves in water and is found in:

- Oats
- Beans
- Nuts
- Berries
- Apples
- Psyllium Powder

For every gram of soluble fiber you add to your diet each day, you may reduce your LDL by 1 mg/dL.

Replace trans fats with healthy fats

Completely eliminate trans fats (including hydrogenated fats). Replace with healthy fats—found in nuts, seeds, fish, avocados, and olive oil.

Healthy Fats

Lose weight

Just by losing 10 pounds, you may lower your LDL cholesterol by up to 8%.

Eat about 500 calories less per day—cut your biggest meal in half—to lose about a pound per week.

Follow the Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean diet is a delicious and effective way to lower your cholesterol as much as 10%, and your heart disease risk by up to 50%. See the Mediterranean Diet handout.

ACTION PLAN

Which of the tips will you try? Circle them.

When will you start? ________

How confident are you that you will accomplish your goal (from 0-100%)? ________

Follow-up plan

References: