

CONTROLLING CHOLESTEROL WITH DIET



Know Your Numbers

Get familiar with your cholesterol profile: total, HDL, LDL and triglycerides.

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL:

This measurement combines HDL, LDL and triglycerides.

AIM FOR: Less than 200

HDL: High levels help rid your body of excess cholesterol.

AIM FOR:

60 and higher (less than 40 is too low)

LDL and Triglycerides:

High levels associated with blockages in the arteries

AIM FOR:

Less than 100 for LDL ... below 150 for triglycerides

Cholesterol is a natural fat-like substance coursing through the blood in your body. When your body produces too much cholesterol, the excess builds up in the arteries and hardens to form blockages. This condition may lead to heart disease and stroke. A major contributor of unhealthy blood cholesterol is diet — in particular, foods high in dietary cholesterol, saturated fat or trans fat.

Daily Cholesterol Limits

Less than 300 mg per day

Less than 200 mg if you have heart disease

KEEP TABS on your daily dietary cholesterol by reading food labels carefully and watching portion sizes.

(Source: American Heart Association)

Daily Saturated Fat Limit

Less than 10 percent of daily calories

Cholesterol Shakers

When you eat meat, opt for lean cuts and small portions.

Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

Go yolk-free if you frequently eat eggs.

Eat fresh fruits or vegetables at every meal and snack.

Include mostly high-fiber, whole-grain breads and cereals in your diet.

The bottom line: Reducing the amount of saturated and trans fat in your diet can lower your dietary cholesterol intake.



CHOLESTEROL-RICH FOODS

Cholesterol is found only in foods of animal origin. Higher amounts are contained in egg yolks; meats (especially organ meats such as liver); poultry, some fish (such as perch, shad and freshwater bass); some seafood such as shrimp; butter, cheese and other whole-milk dairy products; and bakery items made with egg yolks.

Beware of Trans Fat

Prepackaged baked goods, cookies and snacks are often processed with trans fat (partially hydrogenated oils) to retain freshness. Like saturated fat, dietary trans fat can raise blood cholesterol levels. **Tip:** Read the food label and the list of ingredients. The higher these oils appear in the ingredients list, the more trans fat the food contains.

