

Healthy Firsts by Health First

A Newsletter Dedicated to Your Health & Wellness



Trying to Lower Your Cholesterol Naturally? It's Easier than you think...

Like most good things in life, eating to lower your cholesterol doesn't have to be complicated

Lowering your cholesterol can help reduce your risk for heart disease; the # 1 cause of death for men and women in America. Adding just 4 types of foods to your diet along with 20-30 minutes of moderate to light physical activity on most days of the week can help lower your cholesterol.



1. Fish & Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Fatty fish contain large amounts of the blood pressure lowering, blood clot fighting, Omega-3 fatty acids. In addition they also contain the heart healthy mineral, selenium. Together, they prevent plaque buildup in arteries and clotting in blood vessels. Eat 2-3 servings of fish per week. For those of you who aren't fond of sea food, small amounts of omega-3 fatty acids can be found in flax seed and canola oil. If you do not get at least 2-3 servings of fish per week, a daily Omega-3 fish oil supplement is recommended.

Enjoy: Salmon, trout, herring, mackarel, halibut, albacore tuna, flaxseed oil, canola oil

Avoid: Marbled meats high in fat content, meat with lots of skin, fried meats

2. High Fiber Foods

Foods high in soluble fiber can help decrease the undesirable, LDL cholesterol by blocking their absorption into the blood stream. We recommend 5-10 grams or more of soluble fiber per day. Foods highest in soluble fiber include oat bran, legumes, beans, fruits and vegetables.

Enjoy: Oat bran for breakfast with sliced fruit added in, a veggie and legume salad

Avoid: White breads, pastries, processed foods low in fiber



3. Nuts

Rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, just one handful of nuts per day can help reduce your cholesterol and keep your blood vessels patent and healthy. Nuts do tend to be high in calories, so avoid the temptation to have more than one handful of them per day!

Enjoy: Replacing your mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack with walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios

Avoid: Nuts covered in sugar and/or salt

4. Olive Oil

Olive oil contains large amounts of anti-oxidants that can help lower your bad cholesterol, known as LDL cholesterol. So potent are its benefits, that the Food and Drug Administration recommend having 2 tablespoons (23 grams) of olive oil per day. There are several varieties of olive oil. Generally speaking, the darker the olive oil the better it is for you. Extra virgin olive oil has the most health benefits.

Enjoy: Using olive oil as a substitute for butter, margarine and other oils.

Avoid: Butter, cream, ice-cream, whole milk products, cheese, fried food



For ideas on how to integrate these 4 powerful foods into your diet, see our Feature Recipe section.

Ask the Doctor...

Q: Lately I've been hearing a lot about stanols and sterols being added to foods. What are stanols and sterols? Are they safe? Can they really improve my heart health? Thanks. Jen from Palatine.

A: Stanols and sterols are compounds that naturally occur in fruits and vegetables. Structurally, they mimic cholesterol and compete with cholesterol in your body, thus having the ability to lower your cholesterol levels and improve the health of your blood vessels and heart. While the healthiest way to get the recommended amounts of these compounds is by consuming 2-3 servings of fresh fruits and 3-4 servings of veggies daily, they are now also being added to certain foods such as orange juice, margarine, soy milk, rice milk, muffins and yogurts. Stanols and sterols are also available in supplement form. These compounds are completely safe to consume. The Food and Drug Administration and The American Dietetic Association endorse the use of 1.5-3 grams of plant sterols and stanols per day for their cholesterol lowering effects. To see if a food item has been fortified with these compounds, just look for "plant sterols" in the ingredient label.

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Easy Exercise Solutions

Experts agree, 20-30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week combined with a heart healthy diet can have significant cholesterol lowering benefits. A study published in the Lancet journal found that even just 15 minutes of physical activity per day, or 90 total minutes of mild to moderate physical activity per week, can provide health benefits. Remember, you don't have to be physically active for 30 minutes at a time. You can break down your physical activity into short 5-10 minute segments throughout the day. Here are some ideas:

1. Walk, speed walk or jog
2. Take the stairs
3. Skip rope or perform jumping jacks
4. Dance to upbeat music
5. Park farther away from work, home, the store
6. [Perform Health First's 5 Minute Fitness Solution:](#)

Bird/Dog exercises, 1 minute

While on all fours, extend the opposite arm and leg. Hold 2 seconds. Repeat with other side.



Hold a Plank, 30 seconds

Come onto your elbows and feet (see image on right). Hold. If this seems to easy, come up on to your wrists.



Wide stance Squat, 30 seconds

Bring your feet more than shoulder width apart. Come into a squatting position (as though you are about to sit down). Hold.



Single leg bridges, 30 seconds/side

Lay on your back with arms to side and feet flat. Lift your buttocks off the ground & extend one knee off the ground. Hold.



Push-Up, Kick Back, 1 minute

Perform a push-up against a wall and then extend and kick back with one leg. Repeat with opposite leg. Continue for 1 minute.



Chair Bicycles, 1 minutes

Lay on your back with both legs off the ground and hands behind head. Bring opposite knee to opposite leg. Repeat.



Repeat this sequence 3-4 times per day



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Feature Recipe:

This month, we feature not one, but three super easy, super nutritious, heart smart meals.

[For Breakfast: Take-that, Cholesterol! Cereal](#)

- 3/4 cup bran cereal
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/4 cup walnuts or almonds
- 1/4 cup strawberries
- 1/4 cup blueberries
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk

Combine dry ingredients and fruit. Add honey and milk. Enjoy.

[For Lunch: Simple Save-My-Life Salad](#)

- 1 (6 oz) package fresh spinach
- 1/3 cup dried, unsweetened, cranberries
- 1/3 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/3 cup raspberry-walnut vinaigrette (we suggest Newman's Own brand, organic, lighten-up raspberry walnut vinaigrette)
- 1/4 cup herbed goat cheese (or shredded Romano cheese)

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Toss. Serve immediately.

[For Dinner: "Hearty" 30 Minute Salmon](#)

- 2 Boneless Skinless Salmon Fillets
- 4 Sprigs Fresh Rosemary
- 1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- 1 Lemon, thinly sliced
- Coarse salt to taste

Preheat oven to 400°F. Arrange half lemon slices in a single layer on a baking dish. Layer lemon slices with 2 sprigs rosemary. Top with salmon fillets. Sprinkle salmon with salt. Layer with remaining rosemary sprigs and lemon slices. Drizzle with EVOO. Bake 20 mins or until fish can be easily flaked with a fork. Serve with steamed veggies and quinoa.

Health First Wellness is dedicated to each patient's well being. We use chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage therapy, therapeutic exercise and nutrition counseling to provide our patients with optimum pain relief, disease prevention and an overall feeling of whole body wellness. If you are experiencing pain, call us today to set up an appointment. We promise to do everything we can to put your Health First.

This Newsletter is brought to you from the desk of Dr. Vishva M Desai, D.C. Dr. Desai is a Board Certified Chiropractic Physician and Acupuncturist. She also holds a degree in Health Promotion & Exercise Prescription from the University of Oklahoma.

