

- 1 Do you have a **family history** of high cholesterol and heart disease?
- 2 Are you eating a diet high in the **unhealthy fats** (saturated and processed fats)
- 3 Are you having an **excess amount of sugar or simple carbohydrates** (sugar, sweets, cakes, processed or refined foods)
- 4 Are you eating a **low protein** diet?
- 5 Do you regularly consume **excess alcohol**? (may be daily consumption of more than 2 drinks or regular binge drinking)
- 6 Do you have a tendency to **sluggish bowels or constipation**?
- 7 Are you taking any **medications**, including the oral contraceptive pill?
- 8 Are you a **smoker**?
- 9 Do you often have periods of **unmanaged stress**?
- 10 Are you **post menopausal**?
- 11 Do you have any **pre-existing health problem** such as diabetes, hypothyroidism, liver or gallbladder problems?
- 12 Do you do little or no **regular exercise**?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, especially 1, 2 and 3 AND you have a high cholesterol level, then you need to take immediate action to correct your diet and lifestyle to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke. If you answer yes to some of the questions but you don't have a family history of high cholesterol AND your cholesterol is within the high range of normal, you would be wise to start making dietary and lifestyle changes now rather than waiting for health problems to surface.

What can I do to help reduce my high cholesterol?

For most people, simple changes to diet and exercise routines are very effective in ensuring healthy cholesterol is maintained. Here are some helpful guidelines for managing your cholesterol levels:

1. **Exercise** is an excellent place to start. A gentle walk (though more than a stroll) ½ hour a day can do wonders for your body. It can lower your incidence of heart disease, lower blood pressure and help reduce your weight; you may also notice an increase in energy levels. Remember there are many different types of exercise that you can try: walking, jogging, aerobics, dancing, bike riding, swimming and even yoga. If you're on any medications check with your health care professional before beginning any new exercise plan

2. **Diet** is the other important place to make positive changes:

Reduce the Following foods:

- **Reduce Simple Carbohydrates** - These are sugars, processed white flour products, cakes, pastries, biscuits/cookies and sweets.
- **Reduce Salt** - Read all food labels carefully
- **Eat less full-fat dairy** (it's high in unhealthy fats) - Choose low-fat or fat-reduced varieties of milk, yoghurt, cheese (eg. Edam, Ricotta). Enjoy non-dairy milks like soy, oats, rice milk.
- **Reduce other saturated fats**
 - animal products, preserved meats, coconut and palm kernel oils
 - deep-fried foods, pies, sausage rolls and take away foods
 - many people use margarine or vegetable shortening as substitutes for butter because they contain no cholesterol. However, these products often contain compounds called trans-fatty-acids. These *very* unhealthy fats have been linked to heart disease and high cholesterol. Instead, use cold pressed oils such as olive, soybean, flaxseed oil. (Cook with small amounts of olive or sesame oil, but *never* cook with other cold pressed oils like flaxseed or sunflower etc). Extra Virgin Olive Oil can actually help to reduce cholesterol levels. Grill & steam your food. Margarines to lower cholesterol may help – lots of fresh veges will give you naturally what they add to these margarines!
- **Reduce coffee and alcohol** intake.

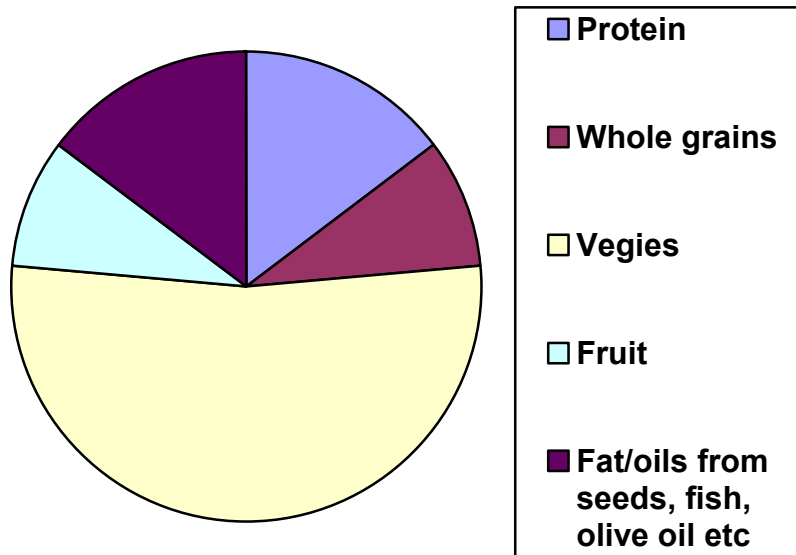


Include more of the following foods:

- Oily fish, salmon, tuna, mackerel, trout, avocado, *raw* nuts and seeds - these all contain healthy fats and protein.
- Have more fibre foods - fresh fruit and vegetables, beans, lentils, psyllium husks, oats, linseeds etc. These all help to promote regular bowel motions and can actually help to bind cholesterol in the bowel and push it out of the body.

- Have more soy products as these promote good cardiovascular health, decrease cholesterol and are protein foods. Try some tofu, tempeh and other soy bean products.
- Eat plenty of raw foods - fruits and vegetables of all the different colours. These provide lots of nutrients, including health-giving antioxidants.
- Lots of garlic, onion and ginger, which are great for lowering cholesterol levels.
- Healthy animal proteins include small amounts of lean cuts of meat and skinless chicken. Enjoy fish up to 3 times a week.
- Have fresh vegetable juices (buy a juicer or have a juice when going shopping)- try carrot, celery and beetroot juice. Carrot and beetroot juice help the liver especially with fat metabolism and this helps to lower cholesterol.
- Drink plenty of plain water daily

on your plate!



- *Think raw & natural
- *Oil but don't grease your body
- * Watch that sweet tooth
- * Keep your bowels moving
- *Re-hydrate your body with water

Managing Cholesterol Naturally

- Cholesterol is a white, waxy substance found in all animal tissues and is produced mainly by the liver.
- A certain amount of cholesterol is essential to life and is a vital part of every cell in the body.
- Your body can normally balance the amount of cholesterol you produce by excreting the excess amount.
- However, when the body is overloaded, high blood cholesterol can occur. This may be due to a number of reasons including too many saturated fats and simple carbohydrates in your diet.
- While some people are predisposed to high cholesterol levels, for most of us the key cause is usually a combination of poor liver function and the foods we eat.



How do I know if I have high cholesterol?

When measuring cholesterol, a sample of your blood is taken and analysed to see how much cholesterol it contains. It is divided into several different types of cholesterol: High density (HDL), Low density (LDL) and Triglycerides. There needs to be a balanced ratio between all 3 – your doctor will be able to give you a break down of your cholesterol.

Often when people have cholesterol problems, their LDL's and Triglycerides are too high and their HDL's are too low.

Over the page is a checklist to help you decide if you may be at risk of high cholesterol levels:

