

Healthy eating to control cholesterol

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in the body's bloodstream and cells. Your body needs some cholesterol to function well. Cholesterol is made by the body and it's found in some of the foods people eat. Too much cholesterol can build up in the arteries and increase your risk of heart disease.¹

What affects cholesterol levels?

Your cholesterol levels are affected by many things including:²

- Diet
- Body weight
- Age
- Gender
- Activity levels
- Genes

Food and cholesterol

There are many foods that may affect cholesterol.

Type of food	What you need to know
Fats^{2,3}	The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends keeping your total fat intake to 25–35% of daily calories. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unsaturated fats may help lower cholesterol levels in the blood when eaten in place of unhealthy fats.• Saturated fats may increase “bad” LDL cholesterol levels.• Trans fats may also raise “bad” LDL cholesterol levels in the blood.
Dietary cholesterol	The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends limiting dietary cholesterol to less than 200 milligrams per day. This is because it may raise the amount of cholesterol in your blood. Dietary cholesterol comes from foods made from animals like meat, egg yolks and full-fat dairy products.



Type of food	What you need to know
Soluble fiber ²	<p>The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends getting at least 5–10 grams of soluble fiber per day.</p> <p>Consuming soluble fiber helps lower LDL cholesterol. During digestion, it dissolves into a gel-like substance that helps block cholesterol and fats from being absorbed. Increasing soluble fiber intake by 5–10 grams per day may result in a 5% drop in cholesterol levels.</p>
Plant stanols and sterols ^{2,4}	<p>Plant stanols and sterols are natural substances found in plant foods. They help stop the absorption of cholesterol in the digestive tract to help lower “bad” LDL cholesterol.</p> <p>The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends a daily intake of about 2 grams. This may help reduce LDL cholesterol levels by 5–15%.</p> <p>Look for them in enriched products, as well as raw plant oils, nuts, seeds, whole grains and legumes.</p>

Helpful tips for managing cholesterol levels

In addition to eating a healthy diet, other changes may help manage cholesterol levels, including:

- Lose excess weight
- Stay active
- Don't smoke
- Medications, prescribed by a healthcare provider

Notes _____

References

¹National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/resources/heart/heart-cholesterol-hbc-what-html

²National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/chol_tlc.pdf

³American Heart Association

www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/FatsAndOils/Fats-101_UCM_304494_Article.jsp#.WMIJV00zWM8

⁴Oregon State University—Linus Pauling Institute

lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/dietary-factors/phytochemicals/phytosterols

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