

Cholesterol

Information for patients and families

What are the types of cholesterol?

LDL Cholesterol (“bad” cholesterol)

- LDL carries the cholesterol from the liver to the rest of your body.
- Too much LDL in your blood increases your risk of heart disease.

HDL Cholesterol (“good” cholesterol)

- HDL carries leftover cholesterol back to the liver.
- HDL cholesterol helps reduce your risk of heart disease.

What is the target for cholesterol?

Your target for LDL depends on your risk of heart disease. Ask your doctor for your target.

What can I do to lower my LDL?

- Your doctor may recommend that you take medicine to help lower your LDL cholesterol.
- You can also make changes to your diet and activity to help lower your LDL cholesterol.

1. Lose weight

- If you are overweight, losing weight is one of the best ways to help you lower your cholesterol.
- Set a goal of losing 1 to 2 pounds per week.
- Aim to lose 5 to 10 percent of your total weight.

2. Limit saturated fat to less than 12 to 15 grams per day.

- Limit foods that are high in saturated fat such as meats, cream, butter, cheese and tropical oils (for example coconut oil).
- Limit meat to 3 to 4 ounces per meal (about the size of a deck of cards).
- Choose lean or extra lean cuts of meat and cut off any fat or skin.
- Avoid processed or luncheon meats.
- Choose cheese with less than 15% M.F. (milk fat).
- Choose low fat milk and yogurt.
- Eat fish or vegetarian sources of protein instead of meat, at least 2 times per week (for example: beans, lentils, chickpeas or tofu).

3. Avoid foods that contain trans fats.

- Trans fats can sometimes be found in packaged baked goods, such as muffins, donuts and croissants.
- Check the “Nutrition Facts” label to make sure you buy margarine and shortening that do not contain trans fats.
- Avoid stick margarines.

4. Limit egg yolks to 7 or less per week.

- Try making omelettes with egg whites or if you are using 2 eggs, remove 1 of the yolks.

5. Eat 30 to 60 grams of nuts per day.

- All types of nuts can help lower your cholesterol. Buy “dry roasted, unsalted” nuts to avoid adding extra fat and salt to your diet.

6. Add plant sterols to your diet (1 to 2 grams per day).

- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. Aim for 7 to 10 servings per day.
- Have $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of nuts per day.
- Eat whole grains, such as brown rice, barley, quinoa and oats.
- Replace your butter or margarine with a margarine containing plant sterols.
- Ask your doctor about taking a plant sterol supplement.

7. Aim for at least 10 grams of soluble fibre per day.

- Add bran bud, oat bran or ground flax seeds to your cereal or yogurt.
- Have steel cut or old fashioned oatmeal for breakfast. Instant and quick-cooking oats do not have as much soluble fibre.
- Eat beans, lentils or chickpeas daily.
- Eat 6 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- Try adding barley to soups and stews or have barley instead of rice.

8. Increase your physical activity

- Aim for 30 to 60 minutes per day.
- Activity can help you achieve or maintain a healthy weight.
- Physical activity can help raise your HDL, which is your “good” cholesterol.

