



Managing cholesterol starts with what you eat

High cholesterol, particularly high levels of “bad” cholesterol, is a risk for heart disease. The Mayo Clinic says that high cholesterol also can increase risk for heart attack. Understanding cholesterol and how to

control it can help people live longer, healthier lives. When these foods are consumed, the liver makes more cholesterol than it normally would, says the American Heart Association.

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that comes from two main sources. It is produced naturally by the liver and is obtained by eating certain foods, primarily animal products like meat, dairy and eggs.

Harvard Medical School says that making certain food choices can help lower cholesterol levels. Some foods help prevent cholesterol from forming, while others lower low-density lipoprotein, also referred to as “LDL” or “bad” cholesterol. Some foods increase the amount of high-density lipoprotein, also known as “HDL” or “good” cholesterol. Still other foods block the body from absorbing cholesterol.

Because food and cholesterol are so closely linked, dietary changes can have a profound impact on people diagnosed with high levels of bad cholesterol. The following are some changes such individuals can implement.

Increase soluble fiber. Soluble fiber is found in oatmeal and other whole grains, flax, apples, legumes, and beans. Because soluble fiber can’t be broken down, it goes through the body and bloodstream like a giant mop, collecting bile generated to digest fats. The fiber and the fat-soaked bile are then excreted in the stool. According to Healthline, bile is made from cholesterol, and when the liver needs to make more of it

to digest fat, it does so by pulling cholesterol out of the bloodstream, naturally reducing cholesterol levels as a result.

Eliminate trans fats. Trans fats, or those foods listed on labels primarily as hydrogenated oils, can raise overall cholesterol levels. The Food and Drug Administration has banned the use of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils by Jan. 1, 2021.

Eat more fatty fish. Harvard Medical School says that eating fish two or three times a week can lower LDL by replacing meat and by delivering LDL-lowering omega-3 fats to the body. Omega-3s reduce triglycerides in the bloodstream and also protect the heart by helping to prevent the onset of abnormal heart rhythms.

Use vegetable oils. Liquid vegetable oils, like canola or soybean, can be used in place of solid fats like butter or lard when cooking.

Choose low-fat dairy. Substitute the low- or no-fat varieties of milk and cheeses instead of high-fat versions.

Dietary changes can make a big difference when it comes to reducing cholesterol.



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