

How Can I Lower My Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in all parts of the body. When there is too much cholesterol in your blood, cholesterol can build up on the walls of your arteries and cause blood clots. Cholesterol can clog your arteries and keep your heart from getting the blood it needs. This can cause a heart attack.

You can lower your cholesterol by taking these steps:

Maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, losing weight can help lower your total cholesterol and LDL ("bad cholesterol") levels.

Eat better. Eat foods low in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol.

Eat more

- Fish, poultry (chicken, turkey--breast meat or drumstick is best), and lean meats (round, sirloin, loin). Broil, bake, roast or poach foods. Remove the fat and skin before eating.
- Skim (fat-free) or low-fat (1%) milk and cheeses, and low-fat or nonfat yogurt
- Fruits and vegetables (try for 5 a day)
- Cereals, breads, rice, and pasta made from whole grains (such as "whole-wheat" or "whole-grain" bread and pasta, rye bread, brown rice and oatmeal)

Eat less:

- Egg yolks
- Fats (butter, lard) and oils
- Packaged and processed foods

Get moving. Exercise can help lower LDL ("bad cholesterol") and raise HDL ("good cholesterol"). Exercise at a moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Take a brisk walk on your lunch break or take the stairs instead of the elevator.

Take your medicine. If your doctor has prescribed medicine to lower your cholesterol, take it exactly as you have been told to.

Source:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, <http://www.fda.gov/womens/getthefacts/cholesterol.html> (accessed September 22, 2008).

National Institutes of Health, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/managingcholesterol/htm/index.htm> (accessed September 22, 2008).

Centers for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/prevention.htm> (accessed September 22, 2008).

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <http://womenshealth.gov/faq/heartdis.pdf> (accessed September 22, 2008).