

## **Lower Cholesterol Articles**

### **Certain Can Foods Lower Your Cholesterol Level**

Did you know that there are cholesterol lowering foods? Are you one of those people who have high cholesterol? Are you concerned that you may not be eating a well balanced diet? You may want to consider changing your lifestyle because any overall improvements will help improve your health. Experts recommend that you eat a diet which is high in fiber, fish oils and garlic. These are some food suggestions that you can help you improve your diet for a better cholesterol level.

#### Soy products

Soy protein or isoflavones and are effective as a cholesterol lowering foods. The recommended daily intake is one to two ounces, or 25 grams, of soy will help you lower your bad cholesterol level by about 8% -10%. If you have a high cholesterol level which is about 260-300, if you change your diet will help lower your cholesterol level by 15-20%. You may want to consider eating some of these Soy products which include: beans, soy milk, flour and tofu. You also may want to consider soy drinks and protein bars that contain 10 to 20 grams of soy protein.

#### Fiber Sources – Fruits, Vegetables and Others

Foods that are rich in fiber are considered as cholesterol lowering foods. Fiber is not easily digested. This can help lower one's cholesterol level. The best fruits to eat are berries, oranges, apples, honey dew melon and cantaloupe, and grapefruit are rich in fiber. The best vegetables to eat are carrots, cabbage, beets, spinach,, broccoli and peas are all great sources of fiber. Oats contain a soluble fiber call Glucan which plays a critical role in lowering cholesterol. Whole grains are cholesterol lowering foods because over-processed ones such as white bread are stripped of their fiber content.

#### Fish

Fish contains omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids which decrease the chances of getting blood clots. Fish is a good source of cholesterol lowering foods because they help you achieve a level of good cholesterol. They also help prevent blood clotting which can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

## Garlic

Studies have shown that garlic is a cholesterol lowering foods. You may want to consider taking odorless coated garlic tablets which will give you the same effect. The small intestine absorbs the garlic. The coating helps the tablet pass through to the small intestine.

You may want to start with looking at cholesterol lowering foods as a part of a healthy regimen to improve your cholesterol level. Exercise will also help. But you need to do both. You need to start eating cholesterol lowering drugs as well as adding exercise into your daily routine. It is best to maintain a healthy routine until your next visit with your physician to see if there is any improvement.

## **Cholesterol and Heart Disease**

There are many of us who are familiar with cholesterol and heart disease. However, there is currently a debate whether cholesterol is the primary cause of heart disease. Some physicians believe that cholesterol is the main cause of heart disease while others disagree. Experts from several heart studies have determined that high blood cholesterol is the primary factor for coronary heart disease or CHD.

Studies show that if you do have a higher cholesterol level, you increase your risk of getting CHD. People who have low levels of cholesterol are not likely to get CHD.

Other experts believe there appears to be a connection between high blood cholesterol and heart disease. Studies show that if you do lower the bad cholesterol, you will drastically reduce your chances of getting coronary heart disease.

Recently, a set of trials were done on this issue, using drugs that lowered the total cholesterol. The use of these drugs which were statins greatly reduced the chance of having a heart attack, bypass surgery, and dying from coronary heart disease-related causes.

There are risk factors that may increase your risk of developing heart disease. There are some risk factors that can be changed, there are some that cannot. Overall, the more risk factors that you have the more likely you will be experience heart disease. Take the time to review these as there some risk factors that can be changed.

Age. The older you get, for males it is 45 years or older. For females, it is 55 years of age or older, you increase your chances of getting coronary heart disease. Genetics. If you have a family history of a parent or relative who died of heart disease.

There are some risk factors that you can change:

High levels of bad cholesterol.

Low levels of good cholesterol.

History of smoking.

High Blood Pressure or genetic predisposition to high blood pressure

because of family history.  
History of Diabetes or if it runs in your family.  
Not exercising and living a sedentary lifestyle.  
If you are obese or overweight.

You may want to consult a physician if you are unsure as to whether you have high blood cholesterol.

Most experts agree that high cholesterol and heart disease are connected. However, there are some experts who disagree that too much animal fat and heart disease go together.

However, there are some experts who believe that stress, physical activity and weight might influence the level of blood cholesterol. Some experts believe that it is not necessarily dangerous but it reflects an unhealthy lifestyle.

Experts go back and forth about these issues. However, if you lead a healthy lifestyle you should not have many problems.

## **Cholesterol Free And Low Cholesterol Foods**

Most people are familiar with the word or have heard of cholesterol, whether it is high or low. Did you know that it is a waxy substance that clogs the arteries?

Cholesterol is critical to the formation of cells and other tissues. But if it is high, it could lead to a stroke. If you have a high cholesterol level, is one of the primary risk factors of getting heart disease. If you maintain a healthy diet and exercise on a regular basis you can lower your cholesterol level. Also, you may want to consider eating low cholesterol free foods.

Keep in mind that, it doesn't give you a blank ticket to eat anything you want because you are eating cholesterol free foods.

You still need to be conscious of what you eat. It is back to basics and you should eat at least three to five servings of fruit or vegetables.

Did you know that fruits and vegetables have no cholesterol? Keep in mind that you can eat fruits and vegetables as snacks, side dishes and as a main dish. Have you thought of making vegetarian dishes as a main course? Make sure that you wash all fruits and vegetables before eating them.

Carbohydrates such as bread, cereals, peas and pasta are foods that are very starchy and full of fiber however, they are low in fat and calories.

Try to eat five to ten servings of this food group daily. If you have a low cholesterol level, you should try to keep the amount of carbohydrates to approximately 60% of the total calories. Make sure that you are choosing whole grain breads rather than white bread because they have more fiber.

Also buy dry cereals because they tend to be lower in fat. Try to limit the amount of sugar and baked goods you eat, as these tend to have empty calories and are not healthy. They also most generally, have a high cholesterol content.

At restaurants, remember to choose those that offer low-cholesterol and healthy low-fat meals. You may want to check with the server and inquire as to how the foods are prepared.

You should always avoid food that is fried, breaded, covered with cheese, fried and other dishes that are high in fat.

You are better off with dishes that are steamed, broiled rather than breaded or fried, poached, grilled, and those dishes that are baked. If you have to eat fast food, try to eat salads and avoid burgers that are layered with cheese, mayonnaise and bacon. Try to eat broiled chicken and lean meats.

You have probably heard that bacon, sausage and eggs have a high amount of cholesterol. You may want to try eating fruits and vegetables and high fiber cereal for breakfast.

## **Cholesterol Readings Explained**

It is a good idea to have your level of cholesterol checked periodically. You will receive a cholesterol reading that consists of your total cholesterol level, lipoprotein levels, triglycerides and high density lipoprotein cholesterol level. This will give your physician an overall picture of your health.

Your physician will want three different levels checked to give him a combined reading. It is recommended that you have the cholesterol levels of the three which is the total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and HDL cholesterol monitored and checked. The best total cholesterol reading is 200mg with a limit of 200 mg to 239mg. Experts predict you are at risk of having heart disease if you have a total of 240mg above cholesterol readings.

### **LDL Cholesterol**

Low density lipoprotein is known as bad cholesterol. If you have high levels of bad cholesterol, it can cause cholesterol deposits in the walls of your blood which increase the risk of possible heart disease. The desirable LDL cholesterol level is below 200 milligrams. The borderline limit of LDL is between 200-240mg. A dangerous level is considered to be 240 mg.

### **HDL Cholesterol**

Good cholesterol is the high density lipoprotein. High density lipoprotein cleanses excess cholesterol from tissues to the liver. The liver then breaks it down and it becomes part of the bile for removal. A recommended HDL level is 40mg. You must try to keep your HDL level within 40mg to 45mg. Also keep in mind that it should never dip below 40mg. A level above 60mg protects the heart and helps improve brain functions because it protects the blood vessels.

### **Triglycerides**

Triglycerides are a type of fat. It collects in the body as fat and then flows into the blood stream. Most fats in our diet are triglycerides.

Triglycerides contribute to heart disease. In high dosages, it thickens the blood and may cause a heart attack or stroke due to clotting of the blood. The recommended triglyceride level is 150 below with a limit of 150 to 199. It should not exceed 200 above.

Keep in mind when reading your cholesterol level, there are no ideal readings. Ideal readings are different for everyone. It depends on the individual's risk factor or genetic predisposition due to family history, sex, overall health condition and age.

Though physicians recommend if you have a total reading of over 240mg, it is an indication of a lifestyle change. This will increase your risk of having heart problems. If you have a history of high cholesterol, you should be checked every one to two years. Make sure you are doing everything possible to assure that you maintain a health lifestyle so that you can live a long and healthy life.



## **Sorting Fact From Fiction About Cholesterol**

Cholesterol levels are confusing. There is good cholesterol and bad and lipids and many other confusing terms. Are you unsure as to what it all means! You are not alone! There is a wealth of information on the subject but how do you know what is fact and what is fiction?

You may want to take the time to study the subject so that you are clear what is true and what is fiction.

True or False: The elderly are the only ones with high cholesterol.

This is SO not true! You can be in your 20's and have high cholesterol. In fact it is recommended that you have your cholesterol checked on a regular basis. If you have a history of heart disease in your family and or live a sedentary lifestyle and have eat poorly you are at risk. Cholesterol tests should be regularly and at least once in every five to seven years to prevent health problems and avoid health complications in the future.

True or False: I do not have a problem with cholesterol because I am rarely sick and I exercise on a regular basis.

You may not have any symptoms if your cholesterol is too high. If you exercise on a regular basis, that is great but, you could still have a problem with cholesterol. Other factors are diet, your weight, age and gender, family history, and other factors.

True or False: If you take vitamin C and vitamin E which are, known as anti-oxidants, you will not have any problems with cholesterol.

False! There are no guarantees! There are several factors that affect the levels of Cholesterol. Vitamins help but there are other determining factors as well. If you want to get started in reducing your cholesterol level, start eating a healthy diet and start exercising.

True or False: Drinking a glass of red wine on a daily basis with dinner makes you immune to heart disease.

Studies have shown that moderate amounts of red wine will increase HDL. However, alcohol is high in calories and it may cause an increase in triglycerides, which will put undue pressure on the liver, and will increase blood pressure.

True or False: Look for health conscious products that have low cholesterol labels.

No. There are some products that are low in cholesterol however, they may be high in saturated fats.

True or False: You should never try to lower your cholesterol level.

The liver produces enough Cholesterol to perform its functions. If you start living a healthy lifestyle, and start an exercise routine, this will help lower your cholesterol level.

True or False: If you are overweight you are destined to have high cholesterol.

Not necessarily, however, it is a contributing factor. You may have problems with high cholesterol and not even know it. You may want to consider a healthy diet and exercise so that you are on your way to living a long and healthy life.

## **Types Of Cholesterol Drugs**

Do you have problems with high levels of cholesterol? Regardless of physical activity, other forms of therapy and dieting? Physicians recommend that you try cholesterol lowering drugs. In case you have not heard of them, there are some new drugs on the market.

Cholesterol lowering drugs should be used as a last resort if you have tried everything else and it has failed. Did you know that cholesterol is essential in cells to your body? However, you can have too much of it as this will increase your risk of heart disease. That's why it is critical to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Your physician will determine if you need to take cholesterol lowering drugs based on blood tests. Cholesterol lowering drugs have proven to help in reducing your cholesterol level.

However, keep this in mind, these drugs are pricey and there are some that have side effects. In an effort to reduce your chances of having high cholesterol you need to maintain a low fat diet, exercise, maintain a healthy weight and if you smoke, stop! If you are concerned or are experiencing side effects, consult your physician.

### **Statin**

There are a variety of cholesterol lowering drugs such as statin. This drug has proven to be successful in lowering cholesterol.

However, this drug is known to cause side effects. Experts recommend if you are taking statin, you should also take Enzyme Q-10. if you take this drug you are depleting your body of necessary enzymes.

### **Bile Sequestrates**

Bile sequestrates are another type of drug therapy. Bile acids are released from the liver and gall bladder in the bile.

They then go through the intestine to reduce the amount of fatty material in the food, this helps with absorption. The released bile acids are then absorbed into the intestine and then to the liver.

Malabsorption can be a problem with this medication.

#### Fibric Acids

Fibric acids cut down the production of triglycerides and stop it from circulating. These drugs also help by increasing the amount of HDL or what is known as good cholesterol.

#### Nicotinic Acid

Nicotinic acids also work by lowering the LDL cholesterol and increasing the level of HDL cholesterol. Large doses of this can lower triglycerides.

Several of these cholesterol lowering drugs are easy and safe to take .Although sometimes they may have a few drug-drug interactions. Gastrointestinal problems such as diarrhea and constipation are common side effects of these drugs. The symptoms are usually mild to severe and usually settle as the drug therapy continues.

Take the time to speak with your physician to assure that you are taking the proper amount of medication in the correct dosage. Choosing the type of drug that is best for you is essential.

## **What Cholesterol Tests Entail**

Have you ever had your cholesterol checked? Did you know that cholesterol tests are different from other tests? The test is more specific to calculate the risk of heart disease rather than diagnosing or monitoring it. If you are at risk for heart disease, you most surely want to have advance notice so that you can take medications, improve your diet and exercise so that you live a long and healthy life.

Experts state that hardening of the blood vessels is associated with high cholesterol. This is due to the LDL cholesterol or low lipoproteins that accumulate in the blood stream and is the main causes of heart disease. As a preventive measure, you should have your cholesterol level checked on a regular basis. It is in your best interest to have it checked regularly.

Experts recommend taking the cholesterol tests every three to five years if they have been diagnosed with high blood cholesterol. This is most generally done in combination of routine physical. Cholesterol tests are usually done with other tests. These include HDL which is the test for good cholesterol and LDL, which is the test for bad cholesterol.

Blood samples are taken and other tests are done to be analyzed by a cholesterol testing device. Cholesterol tests are performed several times a year for those who are on a special diet or low calorie diet and for others who are taking cholesterol medications. Cholesterol tests are done to document the progress in lowering cholesterol.

Generally, if you have taken a cholesterol test you already know that the results are grouped according to:

- \* Ultimate – a cholesterol level of 200 mg or below is desirable because there is a low risk of heart disease.

- \* Borderline and on the high side-- a total cholesterol level of 200 mg to 240 mg is at risk of getting heart disease. If you are in this range, your doctor will more than likely request additional tests are done.

\* Red Flagged as High Risk – a 240 mg cholesterol level is considered to be at a very high risk of getting heart disease. Your physician will more than likely request additional tests such as a lipid profile. More than likely, you will be given a prescription for cholesterol medication along with the recommendation that you start on a low cholesterol diet.

Cholesterol tests are done when you are healthy because the cholesterol level of an individual who is ill will more than likely be very low. Physicians recommend that you wait at least six to eight weeks after an illness before any tests are done. If you are unsure, speak to your physician directly so that the test will be accurate.