

ADVICE FOR CHOLESTEROL LOWERING

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance that the liver secretes into the gut when we eat food high in saturated fat. A certain amount of cholesterol is essential for health: it is needed for the formation of cell membranes, hormones and vitamin D. But when the body has more than it can use, the excess cholesterol in the blood can cause problems by building up in the arteries and restricting blood flow.

How many of these statements describe you?

How many of these statements below describe you?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| I smoke | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I exercise for at least 30 minutes less than 3 times per week | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somebody in my family has cholesterol problems | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Someone in my family had heart problems at an early age (younger than 60) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've got high blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I'm overweight | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I often feel stressed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I'm a woman over 55 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I'm a man over 45 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you ticked three or more boxes on this list, you may benefit from lowering your cholesterol levels. You may want to talk to your doctor or practice nurse about cholesterol.

Helping your heart

There are several small changes you can make to your diet to help improve your overall heart health:

Replace saturated and trans fats with **unsaturated fats** such as sunflower and olive oil.

Saturated fats can raise blood cholesterol levels. They are

found in full fat dairy products such as butter and cheese and also in fatty meat products.

Trans fats can also raise cholesterol levels. They are found in foods containing hydrogenated oils such as pastries, cakes and biscuits and also occur naturally in lamb and beef fat and butter

Cut down on salt. Salt can raise blood pressure and we all eat more than we need.

Government guidelines urge us to **eat plenty of fruit and vegetables** — aim for at least five portions a day, or 400g (around 1lb) in weight.

Choose protein sources carefully — look for lean cuts of meat or poultry, choose the lower fat varieties of dairy products and try to eat fish twice a week, particularly oily fish such as mackerel, sardines, salmon and tuna — good sources of Omega 3 oils.

Eat well-balanced meals which are high in nutrients and **include whole grains** — try to choose high fibre variations such as wholemeal or granary bread, jacket potatoes, wholemeal pasta or brown rice.

Keeping your heart healthy

In addition to maintaining a healthy cholesterol level, there are other things you can do to help keep your heart healthy:

Be physically active

Like any muscle, the heart benefits from being exercised. Physical activity helps strengthen your heart as well as helping to lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels.

Have a healthy blood pressure level

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in the arteries. The ideal blood pressure level is less than 120/80mmHg.

Be a healthy weight for your height

Body Mass Index (BMI) is the best assessment of a healthy size. BMI is your weight in kilograms divided by your height in metres squared. For example, a 1.7m tall person who weighs 60kg has a BMI of 60 divided by $(1.7 \times 1.7 = 2.89) = 20.76$. A BMI of between 20 and 25 is normal, between 26 and 30 is overweight, and over 30 is obese.

Be a non-smoker

The chemicals in tobacco smoke mean a smoker's heart has to work harder and gets less oxygen than a non-smoker's.



LIVE TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT

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	Best choices	Eat in moderation	Eat only occasionally
	Contain least fat especially saturated fat, sugar and salt	eg. 1 portion 2-3 times per week	Contain too much fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt
<p>Bread, other cereals and potatoes</p> <p>Eat plenty and choose the higher fibre varieties when you can.</p>	All breads and cereals without sugar coating (preferably choose wholegrain varieties), pasta, bulgar wheat, couscous, rice, oats, chapatis without fat. Potatoes: boiled, jacket Teacakes, scones, crumpets, crispbreads, plain semi-sweet biscuits, ginger nuts.	Sugar coated cereals. Potatoes: oven chips, roast potatoes prepared with suitable oil (see fats). Sweet cream-filled or chocolate biscuits, pancakes, doughnuts.	Naan breads, fried rice or noodles. Potatoes: those cooked in an unsuitable oil or fat, bought fries Croissants, brioche
<p>Fruit and vegetables</p> <p>This includes juice, fresh, dried, frozen and tinned varieties.</p> <p>Choose at least 5 servings a day</p> <p>1 portion of fruit and vegetables equals: 1 bowl salad 1 piece of fruit 1/2-1 tablespoons dried fruits 2-3 tablespoons vegetables</p>	Fruit: fresh, frozen, dried, canned (preferably in juice) Vegetables: fresh, frozen, canned (preferably without salt or sugar). Vegetables roasted or fried in suitable oil (see fats). Salad vegetables	Vegetables roasted or fried in unsuitable oil (see fats)	Coleslaw and other prepared salads in mayonnaise or dressing
<p>Milk and dairy foods</p> <p>Eat moderate amounts & choose lower fat versions whenever possible.</p>	All milk, but preferably choose skimmed or semi-skimmed. Milk and yogurt with added plant sterols or stanols. Soya milk. Low fat and Diet yoghurt or fromage frais. Low fat cream alternatives. Cottage cheese, reduced fat cheeses, cheese spread	Condensed milk, evaporated milk. Greek yoghurt, creme fraiche, single cream. Edam, Gouda, Brie, Camembert, Cheddar, cream cheese (but keep portions small)	Double or clotted cream Large portions of full fat cheese
<p>Meat, poultry, fish, eggs and vegetarian alternatives</p> <p>Eat moderate amounts & choose lower fat versions when you can</p> <p>Look for items canned in water rather than brine where possible.</p> <p>Choose at least 2 portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily. Oily fish is in the best choice column as it contains essential omega 3 fats.</p>	Trimmed, lean cuts of beef, pork, lamb, bacon, ham – cooked without fat. Lean beef mince. Chicken and turkey, skin removed Fish (white and oily): grilled, baked, microwaved or cooked with suitable oil Most fish tinned in brine, oil or water Fish fingers - grilled Shellfish – cooked without fat and without mayonnaise Eggs – boiled, poached, or fried in suitable oil Soya mince, Quorn, tofu Pulses eg, baked beans, lentils, butter beans, kidney beans, chickpeas	Beef mince Corned beef Mackerel, sardines etc in oil or sauce Eggs fried in unsuitable oil Nuts: peanuts, walnuts, almonds, brazils, cashews, hazelnuts (preferably unsalted)	Fatty meats Pork pies, sausages, pate Fish battered or fried in unsuitable oil Shellfish in mayonnaise or dressing Taramasalata Omelettes, scrambled eggs, scotch eggs
<p>Fats & oils</p> <p>Use small amounts and use unsaturated varieties. Use varieties low in saturated and trans fats.</p>	Cholesterol lowering spreads with added plant sterols or stanols Low fat spreads Spreads labelled high in unsaturated fats Oils high in unsaturated fats eg, sunflower oil, rapeseed oil, soya oil, olive oil	Blended vegetable oils	Spreads and margarines containing hydrogenated fats. Butter, lard, dripping, suet, ghee, Palm oil, coconut oil.
<p>Snacks & prepared foods</p>	Ready meals containing less than 10g fat per serving Tomato based pasta sauces Olives, gherkins, pickled onions Breadsticks	Crisps, savoury cheese snacks	Cheese dishes eg, macaroni cheese Pastry dishes eg, Quiche, Cornish pastie, samosas, spring rolls, pies Take-aways: curries, pizzas, lasagne Instant pot snacks Packet soups
<p>Sweet foods and desserts</p> <p>Only use small amounts.</p>	Jelly, sorbet Reduced sugar jams and marmalades, yeast extract Home baked cakes made with suitable fats Fruit gums and jelly babies, sugar-free gum Soya desserts Canned/ home made milk puddings made with low fat milk.	Canned milk puddings and custard, fruit crumbles Fruit cake Jam, marmalade, honey Peanut butter, chocolate spread	Sweet pastries and pies, cream cakes Bought cakes made with unsuitable fats. Luxury ice creams Chocolate, toffee, caramels
<p>Sauces and dressings</p> <p>Choose fat free and low fat alternatives.</p> <p>Have dressing on the side rather than coating the entire salad.</p>	Herbs, spices, mustard, lemon juice, vinegar, ketchup, salad cream, reduced calorie dressings Low fat mayonnaise	Sweet pickle, picallili	Mayonnaise Full fat creamy salad dressings
<p>Drinks</p>	Water, tea, coffee, low calorie soft drinks, low calorie instant hot chocolate drinks, hot drinks made with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk	Sugary soft drinks Alcoholic drinks	Whole milk drinks, instant malted drinks