

# Five Foods to Lower Your Cholesterol



## 1. Oatmeal, oat bran and high-fiber foods

- Oatmeal contains soluble fiber, which reduces your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the "bad," cholesterol.
- Soluble fiber is also found in such foods as kidney beans, apples, pears, barley and prunes.

## 2. Fish and omega-3 fatty acids

- Eating fatty fish can be heart healthy because of its' high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, which can reduce your blood pressure and risk of developing blood clots.
- The American Heart Association recommends eating at least two servings of fish a week.
- You can also get small amounts of omega-3 fatty acids from foods like ground flaxseed or canola oil.

## 3. Walnuts, almonds and other nuts

- Rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, walnuts also help keep blood vessels healthy.
- Eating about a handful (1.5 ounces, or 42.5 grams) a day of most nuts, such as almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, some pine nuts, pistachio nuts and walnuts, may reduce your risk of heart disease (make sure the nuts you eat aren't salted or coated with sugar).

## 4. Olive oil

- Olive oil contains a potent mix of antioxidants that can lower your "bad" (LDL) cholesterol but leave your "good" (HDL) cholesterol untouched.
- The cholesterol-lowering effects of olive oil are even greater if you choose extra-virgin olive oil, meaning the oil is less processed and contains more heart-healthy antioxidants.

## 5. Foods with added plant sterols or stanols

- Foods are now available that have been fortified with sterols or stanols — substances found in plants that help block the absorption of cholesterol.
- Margarines, orange juice and yogurt drinks with added plant sterols can help reduce LDL cholesterol by more than 10 percent.
- The amount of daily plant sterols needed for results is at least 2 grams — which equals about two 8-ounce (237-milliliter) servings of plant sterol-fortified orange juice a day.

## Other changes to your diet

- For any of these foods to provide their benefit, you need to make other changes to your diet and lifestyle.
- Cut back on the cholesterol and total fat — especially saturated and trans fats — that you eat.
- Saturated fats, like those in meat, full-fat dairy products and some oils, raise your total cholesterol.
- Talk to your doctor about exercising, quitting smoking and maintaining a healthy weight to help keep your cholesterol level low.