

Reducing High Cholesterol

Other Lifestyle Changes to Improve Cholesterol

- **Don't smoke**
If you smoke, stop. Quitting can improve your HDL cholesterol level. And the benefits don't end there. Just 20 minutes after quitting, your blood pressure decreases. Within 24 hours, your risk of a heart attack decreases. Within one year, your risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker's. Within 15 years, your risk of heart disease is similar to that of someone who's never smoked.
- **Exercise regularly**
Regular exercise can help improve your cholesterol levels. With your doctor's OK, work up to 30 to 60 minutes of exercise a day. Take a brisk daily walk. Ride your bike. Swim laps. To maintain your motivation, keep it fun. Find an exercise buddy or join an exercise group. And, you don't need to get all 30 to 60 minutes in one exercise session. If you can squeeze in three to six 10-minute intervals of exercise, you'll still get some cholesterol-lowering benefits.

What should I eat?

Enjoy foods low in saturated fat, *trans* fat and cholesterol, including:

- Fruits and vegetables
- High-fiber foods
- Fat-free or low-fat milk and dairy products
- Omega-3 containing fish like salmon, trout and haddock
- Lean red meats and poultry without skin
- Beans and peas
- Nuts and seeds in limited amounts
- Unsaturated vegetable oils like canola, olive, safflower and sunflower oils in limited amounts

What should I limit?

- Whole milk, cream and ice cream
- Butter, egg yolks, and cheese
- Organ meats like liver, sweetbreads, kidney, and brain
- Bakery goods made with egg yolks and saturated fats
- Saturated oils like coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil
- Foods with *trans* fats like fried foods, baked goods, stick margarines, and shortenings
- High-fat processed meats like sausage, bologna, salami, and hot dogs
- Fatty red meats that aren't trimmed
- Duck and goose meat
- Solid fats like shortening, soft margarine, and lard
- Fried foods

What are some healthy cooking tips for me?

- Use a rack to drain off fat when you broil, roast, or bake
- Don't baste with drippings; use wine, fruit juice or marinade
- Broil instead of pan-frying
- Cut all the fat you can see off of any meat you cook, and take all the skin off chicken and turkey
- Use a vegetable oil spray to brown or sauté foods
- Serve smaller portions of dishes that have some fat, and serve bigger portions of no-fat dishes like rice, beans, and vegetables
- Make recipes or egg dishes with egg whites, not yolks
- Instead of regular cheese, use low-fat cottage cheese, part fat-free milk mozzarella, and other low-fat and nonfat cheeses

Source: American Heart Association
Mayo Clinic

