

Healthy Eating to Lower Your LDL Cholesterol

What is LDL Cholesterol?

Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in your blood carries fat to your arteries. Once there, it can form a fatty material called plaque. Plaque narrows and hardens your blood vessels and can increase your risk for heart disease.

What can we do to lower LDL Cholesterol?

1. Eat Less Saturated and Trans Fat

Saturated fat is mostly found in foods that we get from animals and in hydrogenated and tropical oils. Trans fat is produced when vegetable oil is partially hydrogenated. It is used mainly in packaged and fast foods.

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| • lard | • palm and palm kernel oil | • cookies and baked goods and mixes | • frozen waffles |
| • cream products | • coconut oil | • coffee whiteners | • pastries, pies |
| • butter | • crackers | • specialty coffees | • chocolate |
| • 2 % or whole milk | • commercial muffins | • snack foods | • whipped toppings |
| • gravy | • croissants | • fast foods | • instant noodle soups |
| • regular cheese | | | |
| • shortening | | | |
| • hydrogenated oil and hydrogenated fatty meats - regular ground beef, heavily marbled meats, prime rib, T-bone steak, poultry skin | | | |
| • high-fat processed meats - sausages, wieners, salami, bologna, pepperoni, pate, side bacon | | | |

Circle the foods high in saturated and trans fat that you eat at least 3 times a week. Aim to reduce how often you eat these foods.

Tips to Lower Saturated and Trans Fat

- Use small amounts of vegetable oil or non-hydrogenated margarine in cooking and baking more often than shortening, butter and hard margarine.
- Choose skim or 1 % milk, low-fat yogurt, and cheese with less than 22 % milk fat (MF).
- Limit the amount of cooked meat and poultry to 6 oz. (150 g) per day. 3 oz. (75 g) is about the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand.
- Remove poultry skin.
- Do not "double up" on high-fat foods. For example, skip the cheese on meat sandwiches or burgers.
- Buy lean meats such as:

• round, rump, flank, and loin cuts	• minced, lean or extra lean ground meats	• lean ham
• lean stewing beef	• back bacon	• lean wild meats
		• chicken or turkey breast
- Check the Nutrition Facts table on packaged foods and look for those with the fewest grams of saturated and trans fat per serving.

2. Limit Deep-Fried Foods

Any fat or oil kept at a high temperature for a long time becomes unhealthy.

Examples of deep-fried foods:

- potato chips, tortilla or nacho chips
- chicken fingers, wings, or nuggets
- battered, fried vegetable or cheese sticks
- French fries or onion rings
- donuts
- battered fish or chicken

3. Enjoy Cholesterol-Rich, Low-Fat Foods in Moderation

Eating large amounts of high cholesterol foods often can increase your blood LDL cholesterol level. However, enjoy these foods in moderation as they do have important nutrients.

Follow the suggested limits below:

- Egg yolks: 4 per week. You may have unlimited egg whites.
- Lean red meat: 3-4 times a week
- Shellfish such as shrimp, crab, lobster: once a week
- Liver: once a month

4. Eat More Omega-3 Fat

Omega-3 fat is a polyunsaturated fat that may make your blood less "sticky". This can result in less blood clotting, which can help reduce your risk for a heart attack or stroke. Omega-3 fat found in fish is the most heart healthy type of omega-3 fat. It can also lower your triglyceride level.

Food Sources

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| • canola oil | • ground flaxseed | • soy foods |
| • walnuts | • pumpkin seeds | • foods fortified with omega-3 fat, such as eggs |
| • fatty fish - salmon, sardines, tuna, herring, trout, mackerel | | |

Circle the omega-3 fat sources that you already eat 3 times a week. Work towards this healthy goal if you are not there yet.

5. Choose Monounsaturated Fat

Eat small amounts of monounsaturated fat every day to help maintain a healthy level of "good" HDL cholesterol.

Food Sources

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| • canola and olive oil | • avocado |
| • foods made with monounsaturated oils, such as non-hydrogenated margarine and salad dressings | • almonds |
| | • peanuts and peanut butter |

Tips to Increase Heart Healthy Unsaturated Fat

- Eat fish at least two times a week.
- Enjoy fish in a sandwich, wrap or salad for lunch.
- Use vegetable oils such as canola and olive in cooking and baking.
- Make salad dressings with olive or canola oil.
- Eat small amounts of nuts and seeds most days.
- Buy non-hydrogenated margarine.
- Put peanut butter or other nut butters on your toast.
- Add ground flaxseed to your cereal and yogurt.
- Toss your salad with diced avocado or olives.

6. Limit Total Fat Intake

Choose unsaturated fat more often than saturated or trans fat. It is still important to limit your total fat intake. Enjoy 3 to 6 servings of "added" fats each day. Choose the healthy fats* for at least 3 of these servings.

One serving is:

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| • 1 tsp. (5 mL) oil*, non-hydrogenated margarine* or butter | • 5 olives* |
| • 2 tsp. (10 mL) peanut butter*, other nut butters* or salad dressings* | • 1/8 avocado* |
| • 10 nuts* or 1 tbsp. (15 mL) seeds* | • 2 tbsp. (30 mL) gravy or sour cream |
| | • 1 tbsp. (15 mL) cream cheese or cheese spread |

7. Enjoy More Soluble Fibre

Eat some soluble fibre every day to lower your LDL cholesterol. Soluble fibre is also helpful for managing blood sugars and weight. Psyllium is one of the best sources of soluble fibre. It is used as a fibre supplement in some foods such as in the cereals listed on the next page.

Food Sources	
Cereals and Grains	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kellogg's All Bran Buds and Guardian cereals with psyllium • oat bran, rolled oats/oatmeal • Red River or muesli • oat-based cereals such as Cheerios, Oat Squares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barley or barely flour • rye crackers/Ry-vita • Oatmeal to Go snack bars • granola bars or cereal bars • multigrain or rye bread
Fruit and Vegetables	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables-especially okra, eggplant, broccoli, berries, corn, oranges, grapefruit • dried fruit such as prunes or fruit leather 	
Entrees	Deli Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beans, lentils, chick peas, chili, burritos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hummus, falafels, bean or lentil salad
Nuts and Seeds	Soups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all nuts-especially peanuts, almonds, soy • peanut butter and almond butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • split pea, bean, lentil, minestrone • beef and barley, scotch broth

Source: Healthlink Alberta Website, www.healthlinkalberta.ca

Alberta Health Services offer Chronic Disease Management Program for people living with chronic diseases in Calgary and areas. To enrol for education, exercise or self-management classes, please go to www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/cdm or Call 403 943 2584. In some areas, some of the classes are available in Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin and English.

To learn more, contact your doctor or speak to a nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling: Alberta Health Link toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465). Mandarin Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1554, Cantonese Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1556

If you want to read any of the previous ‘Road To Healthy Living’ series articles, please go to http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/multilingual_health_services.htm and get health information in your own language