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for your employees  
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# WELLNESS WEEKLY

## Lower Your Cholesterol

Your body needs a small amount of cholesterol to function properly, but it is easy to get too much saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet which can increase your risk of developing heart disease. LDL and HDL are two types of cholesterol. You want to lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol, starting with your diet.



- LDL “bad” cholesterol: Can cause plaque to build up in arteries, leading to heart disease.
- HDL “good cholesterol”: Helps clear bad cholesterol from your blood.

### How You Can Lower Your Cholesterol

1. Most Americans eat super-sized meals, with portions that are twice the size recommended for good health. Use your hand to determine a serving size.
  - One serving of meat or fish is about what fits in the palm of your hand.
  - One serving of fresh fruit is about the size of your fist.
  - One serving of cooked vegetables, rice, or pasta should fit in your cupped hand.
2. Load your plate with fruits and vegetables – five to nine servings a day – to help lower LDL “bad” cholesterol. This will also help lower your blood pressure and maintain a healthy weight.
3. Eat fish twice a week for a heart healthy diet. Fish is low in saturated fat and high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids help lower levels of triglycerides, a type of fat in the blood. They may also help lower cholesterol, slowing the growth of plaque in arteries. Eat fatty fish, such as salmon, tuna, or trout.
4. A bowl of oatmeal or whole-grain cereal has benefits that last all day. The fiber and complex carbohydrates in whole grains help you feel fuller for longer, so you’ll be less tempted to overeat at lunch. They also help reduce LDL “bad” cholesterol.
5. You need carbohydrates for energy, but some are better for you than others. Whole grains have more fiber and raise sugar levels less. They lower risk of diabetes and high cholesterol. Other carbs, like those found in white bread, quickly boost blood sugar and may raise risk of type 2 diabetes.
6. 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week can help lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol. It also helps you maintain an ideal weight, reducing your chance of developing clogged arteries. If you’re not used to exercising just go for a walk. Aerobic exercise like walking lowers risk of stroke and heart disease, helps you lose weight, and keeps bones strong.
7. Losing weight is one of the best things you can do to fight cardiovascular disease. Being overweight affects the lining of your arteries, making them more prone to collect plaque from cholesterol. Losing weight - especially belly fat, which is linked to hardening of the arteries - helps raise HDL “good” cholesterol and reduce LDL “bad” cholesterol. Aim to keep your body mass index (BMI), an indicator of body fat, under 25.

Managing your cholesterol is a lifelong process. See your doctor regularly to keep tabs on your health. Follow your doctor’s recommendations on diet, exercise, and medication. Working together, you and your doctor can lower your cholesterol levels and keep your heart going strong.