



How to lower cholesterol naturally



Make changes to your diet

Eating foods high in saturated fats or trans fats raise the amount of LDL cholesterol in the blood. Saturated fat is found mostly in animal products, including fatty cuts of meat, poultry with skin, full-fat dairy products, and certain tropical oils, such as coconut and palm oils. Trans fats occur naturally in some meats and dairy products.

To help improve cholesterol levels, choose foods that are low in both saturated fat and trans fat. These foods include lean meats, fish, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Foods like fruit, vegetables, beans, lentils, and whole grains are also high in soluble fiber. Soluble fiber is known to help lower LDL cholesterol and may decrease the risk of heart disease.

The American Heart Association recommends eating two servings of fish per week, particularly fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, herring, lake trout, sardines,

and albacore tuna. These types of fish are high in omega-3 fatty acids. While omega-3 fatty acids won't lower your LDL cholesterol levels, they may offer other heart benefits such as reducing your risk of developing blood clots.

Exercise regularly

The American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association recommends participating in three or four physical activity sessions per week, with an average duration of 40 minutes per session. The activities should be moderate-to-vigorous in intensity. Good cardiovascular exercises include cycling outdoors or on an exercise bike, fast walking outdoors or on a treadmill, jogging, and using an elliptical or stepper machine. Speak with your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program.

Walgreens

Do not smoke

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your cholesterol, heart, and overall health. Within days your health will begin to improve, and within a year, your risk of heart disease will be cut in half. Smoking doubles your risk of heart attacks and strokes, and recent research shows that smoking just one cigarette a day raises your risk. Smoking makes your LDL cholesterol ‘stickier’ – so it clings to your artery walls and clogs them up. These changes mean your arteries can get clogged up faster. Smoking also raises your heart rate, makes your blood vessels contract, and makes your blood thicker and less able to carry oxygen. The blood cannot flow around your body easily, your heart must work harder, and blood clots can form, leading to heart attacks and strokes.

What about herbal and dietary supplements?

There are a variety of herbal and dietary supplements marketed for improving cholesterol. While some supplements, such as red yeast rice, flaxseed, and garlic, have been clinically studied for lowering cholesterol levels, there isn’t any conclusive evidence that they provide a benefit. Also, it’s unclear if supplements help prevent heart attacks, strokes, or any of the problems caused by high cholesterol. If you are interested in taking a dietary or herbal supplement for cholesterol, talk to your health care provider or pharmacist. Some supplements may cause side effects or interact with the medications that you take.

For some people, healthy lifestyle changes are not enough to lower cholesterol levels. If you have high cholesterol, follow your treatment plan as directed by your health care provider.

References

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