

**30 Days
to Lower
Cholesterol**

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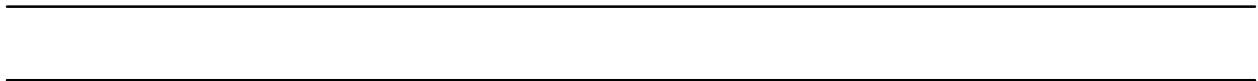
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Cholesterol: A Basic Introduction

If you are reading this, then odds are you are worried about cholesterol. Whether you are concerned because you have read statistics that suggest high cholesterol may be bad for you or whether you are worried because you or someone you know has been diagnosed with having high levels of “bad” cholesterol, the fact is that we could all stand to learn more about this important health issue.

In fact, many health experts now think that high cholesterol levels are among the greatest health problems that face us today. In this book, you will learn how to take control of your health. By the end of this ebook, you will know:

- What Cholesterol is and why it is important
- What too high cholesterol can do and treatments that can help you lower your cholesterol
- What exact steps you can take to live a heart healthy life
- The secrets that can make healthy cholesterol achievable
- How to speak to your doctor about cholesterol
- The myths that can affect your health
- What to eat for a healthy heart

You can use this ebook as you wish, reading it all in one sitting or reading just the sections you find interesting or most useful. A helpful glossary at the end of this ebook can help you understand the basic terms and can refresh the ideas you will learn as you read the following pages. The ideas in this book will help you lower your cholesterol in as little as thirty days. Use as many of the tips and suggestions as can and apply all the tips and advice that you find useful.

This book has especially not been organized to tell you what to do in the first two days, the next week, and so on, because cholesterol is not a step by step process. Several things may contribute to high cholesterol, and several things can help lower it. The steps that must be taken also vary with each person. This ebook does not dictate - it simply gives you the tools you need to develop your own 30 day program for a healthy cholesterol level.

Please be advised that while the advice and tips contained here can be very useful, if you feel that you may have high cholesterol, please consult a doctor. Your doctor can help you in devising a cholesterol lowering plan and can also help you determine which health tips may be most effective for your own particular situation.

So get reading for lower cholesterol and a better heart!

Understanding Cholesterol

In order to understand why it is important to lower cholesterol, it is necessary to first understand what cholesterol is. Cholesterol is a fatlike waxy substance and is produced by the liver. Although cholesterol has purposes and is important to overall health and body function, too much cholesterol in the body has damaging effects.

Cholesterol forms every cell within the body. When the cholesterol level is appropriate, it plays a life-giving role in many functions of the body. When cholesterol is at a good level it works to build and repair cells, produces hormones such as estrogen and testosterone, and produces bile acids which are proven to aid in the digestion of fat.

With too much cholesterol in the body, though, the levels build up and cause damage by clogging your arteries. This puts you at serious risk for disease such as heart and stroke. In fact, the major cause behind heart attacks and strokes is clogged arteries resulting from high levels of cholesterol.

When you eat saturated foods such as dairy, meat and eggs your cholesterol elevates. On the other hand when you eat foods such as fruits, vegetables, and grains you can maintain optimal health as they do not contain cholesterol.

High cholesterol can be avoided! With a nutritious diet, the 50% of all adult Americans with high cholesterol can regain their health and lower their risk of disease by 2%. This is done simply from reducing cholesterol by 1%.

Cholesterol can be managed for life with success! It is recommended that you visit your physician on a regular basis to keep a keen eye on your levels. As we progress with “30 days to lower cholesterol” you will learn healthy, alternative ways to manage your cholesterol without having to rely on medications.

The purpose of this ebook is to inform, educate and provide healthful options.

Understanding the Types of Cholesterol

While most people talk about “cholesterol levels” there is in fact more than one type of cholesterol. In fact, there are several different body functions and several different substances that make up our understanding of “cholesterol.”

As with some fats, cholesterol cannot be dissolved in the blood. Instead, molecules called lipoproteins carry cholesterol to and from cells. Molecules are made from an outer layer of protein and an inner core of both cholesterol and triglycerides, which is another form of fat.

Lipoproteins equip the cholesterol to move around the body. The two main types of lipoproteins

are:

1) High Density Lipoproteins (HDL.)

- *HDL transports cholesterol from cells back to the liver.*
- HDL is either reused or converts to bile acids and disposed. This is known as "good" cholesterol. You want to ensure that your levels of this cholesterol remain high for optimum heart health, since having too low levels of HDL - even when other cholesterol levels are normal - may lead to heart problems. As you work to lower your "bad cholesterol" it is important to also take steps and to keep your HDL levels normal.
- HDL aids to ensure protection from the risk of heart attack and/or stroke. HDL consists of more protein than triglycerides or cholesterol, and aids to remove LDL from your artery walls.

2) Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL.)

- LDL carries approximately 60_70% of cholesterol around the body and are known as "bad" cholesterol.
- Studies show conclusively that high cholesterol leads to much higher risk of heart attack and/or stroke. Other factors involved in this risk are age, gender, smoking, family history of heart disease, and diabetes mellitus.

Obviously, when we speak of having "cholesterol levels" we mean more than one number. To maintain optimum health, you will need to know your levels of both LDL and HDL and will need to work hard to keep both levels in healthy ranges.

Understanding the Causes of High Cholesterol

Besides diet, other causes of high cholesterol are lifestyle, gender and the heritage of the individual.

For some, even maintaining cholesterol at the right levels and being fit and thin will still not prevent the development of high levels of bad cholesterol. Due to heart risk factors besides diet, some people require a very aggressive approach which includes cholesterol lowering medication. We will address this issue as we progress in "30 days to lowering cholesterol."

Lifestyle issues and high cholesterol:

- When we opt for convenience in eating over nutrition, we are setting ourselves up for problems. Eating fast foods and convenience foods results in eating too many fats and salts, which can raise our bad cholesterol levels. In addition, a more sedentary lifestyle also contributes to unhealthy levels of cholesterol. If you want to see a graphic representation of this, consider renting the

documentary movie “Supersize Me.” This documentary details the attempts of one man to live on fast foods and little exercise alone. The results on his cholesterol and body health in just 30 days are truly frightening.

- A visit to a nutritionist or dietician can help us all better understand eating for the right reasons and for optimal health. It is never too late to start on this path.

- Regular exercise will effectively lower cholesterol and will maintain your body strength to function best. Just 20 minutes of aerobic exercise, including walking, each day will lower cholesterol. Exercise does not have to be a large time or money commitment. Simple activities that get you moving and that you enjoy enough to repeat are almost always adequate.

Diet:

- An important consideration in eating is choosing lower fat.

- Buy cooking oils that are unsaturated. Use low fat cooking sprays to replace heavy oils whenever possible. Reduce your overall use of oils even further by using cooking techniques that require little or no oil.

Age and Gender:

- Cholesterol levels increase with age. Women generally have a lower level than men from age 50 to 55. Once a woman starts menopause, the cholesterol level starts to increase.

- While there is not much that you can do about your age, you can make sure that age does not threaten your heart health by sticking to a healthy lifestyle and diet and by getting your cholesterol levels monitored.

Heritage:

- Genetics play a key role in a person's health and this includes the amount of cholesterol you might have.

- Find out if your family battles with high levels of cholesterol and then bring this to your doctor's attention right away. If you have a family history of heart disease and high cholesterol levels, work harder and start earlier in adopting a healthy lifestyle and eating plan.

Your Arteries and Cholesterol

The job of your arteries is to pump blood. The Dorsal Aorta or the main artery branches out into many smaller arteries. Each body system has arteries which are responsible for providing the oxygen rich blood that keeps us alive.

Too much cholesterol in the blood - especially bad cholesterol - prevents arteries from working their best. High levels of bad cholesterol may even prevent arteries from functioning at all, since cholesterol can actually lead to blockages in your arteries. For this reason, it is critical then that we keep arteries free of bad cholesterol for optimal health.

Arteries are constructed of a tough exterior and a soft, smooth interior. Each artery has three specific layers:

- The outer layer
- The middle (muscular) layer
- The inner layer.

Each are made up of epithelial cells. The middle layer is elastic and very strong. It helps pump the body's blood. The inner layer is smooth and allows the blood to flow easily. As the heart beats, the arteries expand and are filled with blood. The heart relaxes and produces enough force to push the blood through. In a healthy person, this system works effectively and the blood can carry oxygen and other essentials throughout the body.

Disease fills the arteries with fatty deposits and this becomes a dangerous obstacle to good health. High cholesterol levels fill arteries with thick substances that prevent your body from working well. Your heart becomes starved of required blood. If this happens often enough you can suffer a heart attack or a stroke.

The main cause behind heart disease is this thickening of the fatty deposits in the arteries, and the main reason behind the blocking of arteries is high levels of bad cholesterol. This means that if you want to prevent heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes, you need to keep your cholesterol levels in a healthy range.

Even having “borderline” cholesterol levels - or bad cholesterol levels that are elevated but not considered “very bad” - can increase your chances of heart disease or stroke. No matter what your current health, eating a better diet and getting exercise can help keep you healthy.

Consider: Heart disease is one of the leading killers in North America. Lowering your cholesterol levels through a heart-healthy diet and exercise regimen is one of the best ways to prevent heart disease. Why wouldn't you want to take the simple steps necessary to lower your cholesterol and enjoy a better and possibly longer life?

Eating For Lower Cholesterol

Eating is one of the things that can affect your cholesterol level a great deal. If you have too high cholesterol, the foods you eat can be one of the things you can control to most effectively and quickly lower your cholesterol. In fact, if you have elevated levels of high cholesterol, a healthy diet is the one thing that you must absolutely do in order to ensure heart health.

Adapting to a Cholesterol Friendly Diet

Once your doctor has confirmed that you have high cholesterol, you can take steps to regain your health by following a low cholesterol and low fat diet. Being true to such a healthful diet will ensure that you can reduce total cholesterol levels by as much as 15 percent. As an added benefit, this sort of diet will also make you feel generally healthier and more energetic as well.

You will benefit further with a regular exercise schedule and this will raise your "good" HDL levels for a total package of healthy living. Do this and within as short as 30 days you will experience a renewed sense of energy and vitality. The effects over all will be immediate.

Following a low cholesterol and low fat diet necessitates that you must do the following:

- Get less than 7% of your day's total calories from saturated fat. In fact, try to lower your saturated fat intake as far as possible. Your doctor may even recommend that you get a smaller percentage of your calories from saturated fat, especially if you have very high cholesterol.
- Receive 25_35% or less of your day's total calories from fat. Again, your doctor may recommend that you consume an even smaller (or a larger) amount of fat than this.
- Consume less than 200 milligrams of dietary cholesterol each day, or follow the limits for dietary cholesterol that your doctor sets for you.
- Limit your sodium intake to 2400 milligrams a day. Sea salt is a better option, but reducing your intake of all salts is the better choice.
- You should be resolved to eat only enough calories to improve your healthy weight and reduce your blood cholesterol level. Being overweight can contribute to cholesterol and to heart ailments. If you need assistance seek out a nutritionist or dietician.
- Refuse foods made with harmful trans fats such as margarine, salad dressing and sauces.
- Enjoy foods high in soluble fiber. These foods include:
 - Oats, rye, and barley
 - Fruits (especially try oranges and pears)

- Vegetables (especially brussel sprouts and carrots)
 - Dried peas and beans
- Avoid the Following Foods for Best Health:
 - High cholesterol foods can increase your level of blood cholesterol. High cholesterol foods include:
 - Organ meats (this includes liver, which may be eaten in small quantities)
 - Egg yolks
 - Full fat dairy products
 - Fried and processed foods are often high in fat and salt, which can wreak havoc on your heart health. Limit and eat only in moderation if at all:
 - Highly processed foods, and especially processed meats such as deli meats, sausages, hot dogs, bologna, salami and fatty red meats
 - All foods that are fried, especially deep fried foods
 - You will produce meals that have lower saturated fats when you try the following methods of food preparation:
 - Bake
 - Broil
 - Microwave
 - Poach
 - Steam
 - Grill
 - Roast (only if you remove fats that are melted in the process)
 - Lightly stir-fry or sauté using low-fat and low-salt broth

Selecting your Foods

Enjoy a wide variety of foods regularly, including select cuts of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts each week.

You can further keep your blood cholesterol levels low by doing the following:

- Choose chicken and turkey that has the skin removed. You can keep the skin on to seal in the juices so long as you remove the skin before eating.
- When selecting meat, choose leaner cuts, white meat, and cuts that have less white “marbled” texture. The white “marble” is fat that can increase your cholesterol.
- Select fish such as cod that has less saturated fat than even chicken or other meats.
- Even the leanest cuts of meat, chicken, fish, and shellfish have saturated fat and cholesterol so limit your daily intake to 6 ounces or less.
- Remember: You can increase soluble fiber if LDL is not lowered enough from reducing saturated fat and cholesterol.

Making Healthy Eating Better

One of the best things you can do for your cholesterol levels is to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. Not only do these foods have no dietary cholesterol that can raise your bad cholesterol levels, but some fruits and vegetables have been linked to lowering cholesterol in patients. Research studies have proven numerous times that one of the best things you can do for yourself if you are worried about your cholesterol level is to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables.

Studies also often show that North Americans eat far less fresh fruits and vegetables than they should eat, a fact that has often been suggested as a key cause for the higher cholesterol levels and heart disease levels - not to mention the higher rates of obesity - that North Americans face. To put it simply, those nations that eat more fruits, vegetables, and grains are healthier - and have lower cholesterol levels as a whole.

As an added bonus, you do not have to worry as much about eating too many fruits and vegetables. While you do not want to overeat, you can eat far more fresh fruits and vegetables than meat products and remain heart healthy. You can only eat small portions of animal products before you have to worry about cholesterol content. With vegetables and fruits, there is no such worry. If you have always felt deprived while following low-fat diets in the past, you can avoid this in the future simply by eating more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Increasing your intake of fresh (not canned, not poached, not sweetened or boiled) fruits and vegetables *significantly* should be your first goal as you try to lower your cholesterol over the next 30 days.

One of the easiest ways to introduce more fruits and vegetables into the diet is to eat different types of fruits and vegetables. When most of us think of “veggies” we think only of a few. In fact, there are many types of delicious fresh produce out there that can create spectacular meals while lowering your cholesterol. Consider all the vegetables you may not have tried yet (please note that this list is not complete - there are too many vegetables to list here - and please note that some of these vegetables may be classified as fruits):

- Alfalfa sprouts
- Anise
- Artichoke
- Arugula
- Asparagus
- Avocado
- Beans (there are many different kinds of beans, from black beans, borlotti beans, broad beans, chickpeas, green beans, kidney beans, runner beans, soy beans, red beans, mung beans, navy beans, lima beans to azuki beans, and many others)
- Bean sprouts
- Lentils
- Peas (again, there are many delicious brands of peas, many which you likely have not tried before. These may include snow peas, green peas, sugar snap peas, and many others)
- Beets and beet greens
- Bok choy
- Breadfruit
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage (there are many kinds, ranging from red and green to Chinese cabbage and others)
- Calabrese
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Chard
- Chicory
- Collard
- Corn
- Celeriac
- Daikon
- Eggplant
- Endive
- Fennel (whole fennel, not just the seeds, can be used in cooking)
- Fiddleheads
- Frisee
- Garlic
- Chives
- Kai_lan

- Kale
- Kohlrabi
- Leek
- Lemon grass
- Onions
- Lettuce (if you have always eaten iceberg lettuce, you will be stunned by the range of lettuces out there, including Bibb and many others)
- Mushrooms (although mushrooms are usually served alongside vegetables, it is a fungus. There are many types of mushrooms, from the common to the exotic, and they can easily be bought fresh or dried to add flavor to just about every meal)
- Mustard greens
- Nettles
- Okra
- Peppers (from hot peppers like the habanero and others to sweet green, orange, yellow and red peppers, these vegetables are very good for you and extremely tasty)
- Spinach
- Radicchio
- Rapini
- Parsnips
- Radishes
- Rutabaga
- Turnip and turnip greens
- Skirret
- Squashes (there are many of these, from butternut to acorn to pumpkins and gourds. Also be sure to try gem squash and spaghetti squash)
- Zucchini
- Cucumber
- Tomatoes (these range from hot house tomatoes to cherry and grape tomatoes - their taste, not just their size, differs)
- Tubers
- Potatoes (from yams and sweet potatoes to new potatoes, red potatoes, and others, these vegetables present an almost infinite variety)
- Water chestnuts
- Watercress

Consider also all the fresh fruits you may not have tried yet:

- Apples (there is an almost infinite variety of these, some quite rare. Try the following varieties:
- Akane, Arlet, Blushing Golden, Braeburn, Centennial Crab, Chieftain, Cortland, Empire, Empress, Fuji, Gala, Honey Crisp, Jonagold, Kandil Sinap, Liberty, Mantet, McIntosh, Mutsu,
- Northern Spy, Patricia, Red Astrachan, Red Secor, Russet, Starr, Virginia Gold, Yataka, Yellow Transparent, Wilson Juicy, and the many others available at your grocery store and farmer's market)

- Apricots
- Bananas (try Fruit Bananas, Apple Bananas, Baby Bananas, Baking Bananas, Red bananas, and others)
- Berries (besides the usual strawberries and raspberries, there are dewberries, boysenberries, loganberries, cloudberries, wineberries, bearberries, bilberries, blueberries, cranberries, huckleberries, lingonberries, barberries, currants, elderberries, gooseberries, nannyberries, sea grapes, crowberries, and others)
- Cherries (from sour cherries, Monmorency cherries, and sweet cherries such as Black Russians, Chinooks, Lapins, Hedelfingers, and others)
- Clementines
- Dates
- Figs
- Grapefruits
- Grapes (there are many, many kinds, ranging from pale greens to very deep purples)
- Guava
- Kiwis
- Kumquats
- Lemons and Limes
- Lychee fruits
- Mangos
- Melons (Red water, Canary, Canteloupe, Cassava, Honeydew, Watermelon, and others)
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Papayas
- Passion Fruits
- Peaches (including Encore, Reliance, Red Haven, and Sensation Dwarf Peach, among others)
- Pears (including Asian pears, Beirschmidt, Bartlett, and others)
- Persimmons
- Pineapples
- Plums (including Mt. Royal Plum, Opal, Stanley Prune_Plum, Unize Plum, Dietz, Empress Prune_Plum, Starking Delicious Plum, and many others)
- Pomegranates
- Pummelo
- Rhubarb
- Star Fruit
- Sweety
- Quinces
- Tangerines
- Tangelos
- Ugli Fruits

Are there fruits and vegetables on this list that you have not tried? There likely are. The fact is, most of us have tried only a small fraction of the fruits and vegetables that are out there. When we say that we “don’t like” fruits and vegetables or when we say that we “grow tired” of them,

what we are really saying is that we do not have enough variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in our diet.

Look back over the list of fruits and vegetables - treat it like a checklist of the food adventures you could have with food. Which foods sound exotic or interesting? Take a chance today and pick up some fresh fruits or vegetables that you have never tried before. Your taste buds and your cholesterol level will thank you for it. Realize that these lists of fruits and vegetables is far from complete - it is only a way to get you started in discovering new fruits and vegetables. Make it a mission to find new and exciting fruits and vegetables that you can enjoy fresh to lower your cholesterol.

The secret to low-fat eating is to make eating the right foods as attractive as possible. When you have many types of healthy and delicious foods to choose from, you will naturally choose foods that are good for you and for your heart. Introducing a huge variety of fresh fruits and vegetables into your diet is one sure way to do this.

Over the next 30 days, use this list of fruits and vegetables. Print the list and circle all the fruits and vegetables you have not tried. Make it a mission to buy some fresh fruits and vegetables you have not tried.

In fact, every week, find a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables you have not tried and try them. Read about new varieties of fruits and vegetables and try them as well. This will add variety to your diet and make it much easier to eat plenty of the foods you need to lower your cholesterol and stay healthy.

Cooking and Cholesterol

If you want to lower your cholesterol, you will want to cook your own meals more often. This is because many restaurants add lots of fat and salt to their foods in order to cheaply add texture and taste. Convenience foods, of course, are notorious for offering poor nutrition and plenty of fat, salt, and sugar.

If you want to lower your cholesterol over the next 30 days, avoid all fast-food, convenience, and prepackaged meals.

This isn't hard to do, even if you are lost in the kitchen. There are a number of very fast and easy ways to ensure that you can whip up tasty and cholesterol-friendly meals - no matter how harried your schedule:

- If you are very busy and tired at the end of a long day, a salad and sandwich take less time to put together than it takes to phone the pizza parlor. Wrap some veggies in a tortilla, cut more veggies into a salad, and drizzle the salad with olive oil and lemon juice. Use a mashed avocado or salt-free salsa as the "dressing" on your sandwich. Soups and stir-fries are other kitchen friends of busy people who aren't very handy in the kitchen.
- Keep fresh ingredients on hand and don't tempt yourself by keeping convenience foods and

junk food in your house.

- Choose fresh ingredients - the very freshest you can. Not only is this healthier for you, but you will need less fat and salt in your cooking if your food ingredients are flavorful on their own.
- Find low-fat and cholesterol-friendly recipes in cookbooks and plan to make these recipes. There are many recipe books at your local library - and many of these feature heart-healthy and fast recipes that can make cholesterol-friendly eating a snap. Don't overlook cookbooks that feature Chinese, Japanese, Raw food, Vegan, and Indian recipes. These are often heart-friendly and contain enough variety to keep you happy with your low-fat diet forever.
- Buy some fresh herbs. Use these to add flavor to your cooking rather than relying on salt. If you must use salt, use only a pinch of the best sea salt you are able to buy.
- If you have recipes you cannot part with, switch ingredients to healthier alternatives. Use good olive oil instead of butter, low-fat products instead of the regular kind and experiment with cutting salt out of recipes entirely.

Cooking to lower your cholesterol is not very hard. There are a few basic foods that almost anyone can make that can keep your health in good shape:

Salads: Even if you are not an excellent cook, you can easily create a salad that is enticing. Simply chop up some favorite salad greens (mescaline mix, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, zucchini, herbs) and garnish with a few nuts. You can make your own dressing by mixing herbs (such as basil or thyme) and a squirt of lemon or you can choose prepared dressings that are very low in salt and fats. You can also create a very low fat salad dressing by combining half an avocado with some herbs and lemon juice. Avoid croutons, bacon bits, whole milk products such as chesses, eggs, and other high-fat foods in your salads. If you do want to add meat to your salad, opt for skinless poultry.

Fruit Salads: Chopping up some of your favorite fruits, berries, and lemons can make a beautiful and attractive salad that is very low fat. If you are using apples or other fruits that tend to "brown" in your salad, a squirt of lemon juice over your salad will keep your fruit salad attractive and healthy. A fruit salad is an especially excellent choice for breakfast or a later meal and is appropriate even for those who have very high cholesterol and so must follow a very low-fat and very low-cholesterol diet.

Sandwiches: Sandwiches are quite easy to make. Simply choose healthy breads or pitas or tortillas that are low in fats and salts and choose lots of vegetables for your sandwiches. Avoid highly processed deli and sandwich meats. Instead, use lean and skinless chicken or other poultry. Instead of fats or mayonnaise on your sandwiches - which can increase the fat content of you sandwiches considerably - choose to flavor your sandwich with fresh sweet onions or low-sodium mustard or salsa.

Pastas: There are a number of pastas available, from fresh pasta or dried pasta to vegetable pastas and rice pastas. All can be made into delicious and heart-friendly meals in minutes. Simply cook the pasta in a pot. Shred your favorite vegetables or cut them into very small

pieces. Combine the vegetables with some low-sodium and low-fat chicken or vegetable broth and cook until vegetables are softer but still crisp. Add the pasta and toss until the vegetables are the desired consistency. Add your favorite fresh herbs (basil is a good choice) and combine. This can be a very tasty combination and is still quite healthy for you. You can make similar meals with rice or even low-fat tofu. Many prepared pasta dishes use plenty of salt or cream-based sauces, but some combination of this recipe can give you a tasty meal with less fat.

Smoothie: Combine your favorite fresh fruits in a blender with fresh fruit juice and a small squirt of honey. Combine until blended. This makes an excellent and very healthy snack. It can also be a great quick breakfast on days when you are in a rush. Experiment with different fruit combinations to find different tastes. Chilling or even freezing some of the fruit before serving can produce a nice chilled drink that is perfect for summer. If you are craving desserts, you can add a small amount of very low fat frozen yogurt to this recipe and use frozen fruits to get a tasty and heart-friendly alternative to ice cream and other desserts.

Grilled dishes: Brushing vegetables and lean meats with lemon juice and herbs and grilling on the barbeque is a great way to enjoy fat-free good-for-you foods that are easy and fast to create.

Lean meat dishes: When you have chosen your lean cuts of meat, you can make these foods even healthier by reducing the amount of fat you use in preparing them. For example, marinating poultry and other meats in lemon juice and fresh dill or in pureed fruits and vegetables is a heart-friendly way to get plenty of flavor into your cooking without adding fat. At many fish shops, you can get planks of cedar that are perfect for baking or grilling fish - simply place the fish on the cedar, cover with lemon juice and possibly herbs and grill or bake until done.

Desserts and Snacks: Limiting desserts and snacks in general can help you control your weight and your calories intake and so keep your heart healthy. If you absolutely crave a dessert or snack, though, try to stave off the craving with fresh fruit. If this does not work, occasionally eating low-fat desserts and snacks such as angel food cake, fig and fruit bars, low-fat yogurt, fruit sherbert, Jello, animal or graham crackers, wafers, puddings made with low-fat milk that make lower-fat alternatives. However, these products still do often contain sodium, plenty of calories and some fats, so overindulging in these will certainly not allow you to keep your heart healthy. Also, take care to read the labels on these snacks and choose the brands with the least sugar, calories, fat, and salt that you can.

REVIEW

A low cholesterol diet is achieved by eating foods low in saturated fat and concentrating on the following:

- Use herbs instead of salt in cooking.
- Consume fat free, skim, or 1% dairy products

- Watch out for bottled and canned drinks and especially for sports beverages - many are very high in sodium, calories, and sugars.
- Choose only lean meats. Enjoy white meats, fish, and poultry rather than red meats.
- Eat plenty of fish
- Enjoy only skinless poultry
- Select plenty of whole grain foods
- Eat lots of fruits
- Read food labels and choose foods low in fats (especially saturated, polyunsaturated, and hydrogenated fats), sodium, and cholesterol
- Choose fresh rather than processed, spiced, prepared, pickled or tinned foods. If you cannot find fresh produce out of season, try frozen foods that have no sauces or other ingredients added.
- Eat lots of vegetables

Children and Cholesterol

Many people assume that high cholesterol is a problem that affects middle-aged adults only. In fact, many people don't even worry about their cholesterol when they are younger, eating all the fatty convenience foods they want, assuming that their early diet makes no difference.

Nothing could be further from the truth. More children today suffer from high cholesterol. In fact, the numbers of children who are taking cholesterol drugs is on the rise! Some studies have suggested that a childhood of poor eating choices can contribute to higher cholesterol later in life.

Besides this, many of the eating habits learned in childhood affects eating in adulthood. Children who are used to eating high-fat foods and convenience foods are more likely to make the same choices as adults. Switching to healthy foods in adulthood may be harder for children who have made less-than-heart-healthy food choices all their lives. For all these reasons, controlling food intake and lifestyle choices even in early life can contribute to life-long heart health and good cholesterol levels.

If you have children, you can help ensure that they make the right food choices that can help them with their cholesterol levels now and later in life. In fact, if you and other members of your family have high cholesterol, you need to introduce your children to cholesterol-healthy eating, as your children may be at an increased risk of developing high cholesterol themselves.

Luckily, it is not that hard to teach your children how to make smart food and lifestyle choices that are heart-healthy:

- Teach your children about healthy eating and cholesterol. If you have high cholesterol yourself, you may want to speak to your children about this. Informed children are better able to make smart food choices that can help keep their cholesterol levels healthy later in life.
- Let children make healthy food choices for themselves. Give your children some say about the fruits, vegetables and other foods that they like. Go through heart-healthy cookbooks with your children and let them help you decide what recipes to try.
- Be careful of the food and cholesterol attitudes you convey to your children. Children pick up emotional cues from their parents. If you treat a cholesterol-friendly diet as a type of punishment, your children will likely see it the same way. If your children see you turn to fatty junk food when you are depressed or feeling stressed, they will likely do the same thing. Many parents are fussy eaters and pass this on to their children, which is a terrible disservice. Fussy eaters will simply not try the different healthy foods out there simply because the foods are "different."
- Do not reward children with food. If your child does well at a sport or gets great grades in school, do not take them to a restaurant or for take-out to celebrate. Give them horseback riding lessons or let them choose a toy or favorite activity instead. Many parents are tempted to keep

sweet foods such as cupcakes and cakes for “special occasions” and “special treats” but this inadvertently makes children associate sugary foods with good times and vegetables with punishment or everyday life.

- Take your children food shopping - especially when you are shopping for fresh produce. Let your children choose which vegetables, fruits, and other healthy foods they would like. Encourage your children to decide which fruits and vegetables look as though they might be tasty. Treat your produce shopping trip as an adventure and your children may be more likely to eat their fruits and vegetables without a fuss.
- Monitor what your children eat. As a parent, it is your responsibility to make sure that your children eat three meals a day that include foods that are low in fats and high in nutrients. Reduce the amount of sugars and fats your children eat and limit how much junk food is allowed.
- Become involved in your child’s school lunch program or cafeteria. Many schools offer less than healthy school lunches as well as vending machines full of sugary foods. At a number of schools, though, parents have banded together to force school boards to provide better foods choices for students. Use this as your inspiration to make sure that your child can make healthy foods choices in school.
- If you are worried about what your children eat, consider taking them to a nutritionist who can help teach them what they should be eating.
- Even if your child has elevated cholesterol levels, realize that growing children still need more fats and nutrients than adults. Never simply place your child on a very low-fat diet - consult with a pediatrician to find a diet plan that can help your child grow while keeping cholesterol under control. A too-low-fat diet may affect childhood development.
- Teach your children about the dangers of smoking. Smoking is a risk factor for cancers, heart disease, and high cholesterol.
- Get your children to exercise. Virtually all health experts agree that North American children do not exercise enough. This has disastrous effects on cholesterol levels and overall health. One of the best things you can do to keep your children away from the dangers of high cholesterol is to get them to exercise at least a little each day. Find an activity they enjoy and encourage them in their activity.
- If your child smokes, is overweight, or has at least one parent who has a cholesterol level of more than 240mg/dl, your child is at an increased risk of high cholesterol - even at an early age. Take you child to the doctor - especially if your child has more than one of the risk factors - for a complete check-up and cholesterol check.

Two Big Secrets that Can Help You Lower Your Cholesterol

Most of us know what we have to do to lower our cholesterol. Face it, most of us have been taught which foods are healthy and low in fat and which are less than good for us. However, adopting a very low-fat diet and healthier lifestyle is often challenging, especially if we have followed less than ideal eating and life patterns for some time. Although we may know which foods we should be turning to and which lifestyle changes we need to make, we don't always do what is right.

If you are inventing excuses or having a hard time sticking to the diet plan your doctor or nutritionist has helped you develop for your cholesterol level, consider two secrets that can help make lowering your cholesterol over the next 30 days far less painful:

Secret #1: Advertising Can Help You Lower Your Cholesterol.

It sounds crazy, but advertising can help you lower your cholesterol because advertising is likely already a big part of your higher cholesterol. Think about it: why do you eat the way you do? At least part of the reason has to do with learned behavior. You learned to like some foods as a child, but you have also learned to associate certain foods with certain ideas and ideals - and likely this has been the doing of advertisers.

Do you associate champagne and truffles with elegant dinner parties? Chips and beer with a fun night out? Lattes with work friends? Advertisers spend millions and even billions of dollars getting you to eat their foods - even when those foods are processed and contribute directly to higher cholesterol.

When you picture a hamburger, you likely picture the hamburger you see in advertisements - a large, juicy burger with all the toppings. When you think of a salad, you may not get the same strong images in your head, simply because salads and vegetables are advertised a lot less. Think of the last ten food advertisements you have seen. Odds are, they were for less-than-healthy processed foods.

Traditionally, less than healthy foods have needed advertising, because they were not needed. Today, though, there is a huge market for convenience and "junk" foods. When you visit your local grocery store, compare the amount of shelf space given to convenience foods, junk foods, sugary foods, and sodas to the amount of space given to the produce section.

In too many grocery stores, the amount of space that fresh produce and grains take up is far less than the amount of space devoted to less heart-healthy foods. This is no mistake. Take a look at those high-fat and cholesterol-high foods. Odds are, they come in brightly designed packages that grab the eye. Often, they are placed at eye level. Advertisers are trying to make their products appealing. Is it any wonder that it is hard to walk by the foods you know are less than healthy for you?

You can turn the power of advertising in your advantage, though, and lower your cholesterol over the next 30 days as well. Start with your own cholesterol-lowering action plan:

1) Reduce the amount of food advertising you see. Advertisers do an incredible job at making foods attractive, but many times these foods are less than great for your cholesterol level. There is no reason why your heart health should suffer because some advertiser is good at their job. Figure out where you see advertisements for foods and then avoid those ads. Most people see the majority of food advertisements on television. If this describes you, avoid the television for a while and watch your cravings for fatty foods decrease. Also avoid radio ads and restaurant advertisements in magazines and newspapers.

2) Make good-for-you foods appealing. Put your low-fat dinners on nicer china and eat at the table instead of in front of the television. Use brightly colored fruits and vegetables and arrange your heart-healthy food in an attractive way on the plate, much as restaurants do. Add some music or candles to your dinner. Any small and fast touches that can make your meal more appealing will make your new low-fat diet seem more like a luxury than anything else.

After all, this is exactly what restaurants do to advertise their food when you are actually in the restaurant - they add ambience to make the meals more attractive and appealing, so that customers are more likely to walk away feeling happy and satisfied with their meal.

In fact, good restaurants will often spend large budgets on consultants that can tell them what they can do to make meals more appealing to customers. Is it any wonder that restaurant meals - even those that are fatty and terrible for your cholesterol - are so hard to resist? The great thing is that you can add this same type of “advertising” to your own low-fat and heart-healthy meals.

For the next 30 days, make your low-fat and healthy meals at home more appealing in any way you can think of and you will be amazed at how much easier your new diet is to stick to.

3) Describe foods in a way that makes them appealing to you. Advertising works by staying with you. Advertisers work very hard to make sure that you remember jingles and descriptions of foods - that’s why you can often sing the slogans for popular advertisements years after the ads are no longer shown.

You can use the same technique to make good-for-you low-fat foods seem appealing. This is especially important since there are few ads for these foods and many of us come to associate negative images of health foods. You likely have heard fresh fruit and vegetables described as “rabbit food” or as being “boring” or even “tired” or “wilted.” This is not likely to make you crave these foods - especially since you are always hearing great adjectives - such as “delicious” and “juicy” described about fatty foods.

Try to do the same thing as advertisers - when buying food that is good for you, watch out for negative words. Use words such as “crisp” and “delicious” to describe low-fat and good-for-you foods such as produce and lean meats.

4) Use a little negative advertising. Whenever you find yourself craving foods that are high in fat or sodium, use a little negative advertising. As soon as you are aware that you are craving the foods, imagine them in the worst possible light - as mushy, greasy, cold, congealed, and disgusting.

This will make bad-for-your heart foods seem far less attractive.

If you find that you crave convenience foods, fast foods, and other foods you are trying to avoid during the next 30 days, try to find ways to make these foods less appealing. For example, recall the times you have had terrible fast food or convenience food meals. Ask your friends and family for their dining-out horror stories, and look up stories about the disgusting things people have found in the fast foods and convenience foods.

Collecting and reading stories about the hairs and other unappetizing things that have been found in convenience food will make these foods seem far less attractive. By making heart-healthy foods such as vegetables and lean meat more attractive and high-fat foods seem more disgusting, you will find it much easier to stick to a low-fat diet - without feeling cheated or deprived.

Secret #2: Make High Cholesterol Harder than Lowered Cholesterol.

What this means is that you should make cholesterol-friendly food choices easier on yourself than bad-for-you choices. That way you are far more likely to reach for low-fat, healthy foods over the next 30 days - and for life! - and are less likely to cheat on your new eating plan. There are several ways to set yourself up for cholesterol-lowering success:

1) Get rid of bad-for-you foods and temptations. If you keep cookies, fried foods, and other temptations around, you are more likely to turn to them when you are feeling hungry. As soon as you learn from your doctor that you need to take care about what you eat because of elevated cholesterol, go through your home and get rid of the foods that you should be eliminating or cutting back on.

Give them away to a friend or food bank, if you can. Replace your foods with lower-fat or healthier alternatives. Also get rid of any fliers, advertisements, or menus from take-out places and restaurants. If these things are not in your home, you are far less likely to be tempted by them.

2) Make your kitchen a heart-healthy place. If you have a deep-fryer, give it away. Invest in parchment paper, no-stick cooking ware, a rice steamer, wok, or other appliances and gadgets that make heart-healthy and low-fat cooking more likely. You do not have to invest a lot of money for this. Just buying parchment paper (for lining cooking sheets) and getting rid of appliances that are only for high-fat cooking is often enough to make good low-fat cooking almost automatic.

While you are cleaning out your kitchen, try to find ways to make cooking in your kitchen more appealing. Hang up some nice curtains or at least get rid of the clutter. If your kitchen is an

enticing place to cook, you are more likely to cook at home rather than being tempted to eat out.

3) Eat in. For the next 30 days, as you work to lower your cholesterol, you should eat in and eat foods you have prepared yourself almost all the time. Prepared foods and foods you buy from take-out restaurants and in dining areas do not give you as much control over ingredients and preparation. When you make your meals yourself, you can easily reduce how much fats and sodium goes into each meal.

4) Get lots of appealing heart-healthy foods into your kitchen. If you make healthy foods more attractive and visible, you are more likely to reach for them when you are hungry. Buy pretty hanging bowls for your citrus fruits and vegetables instead of hiding them in your crisper. Covered mesh containers are available for fruits - these containers allow fruits to ripen and stay visible, but prevent fruit flies.

5) Consider taking a heart-healthy cooking class. Many community centers and cooking schools now offer cost-effective cooking classes in cholesterol-friendly and heart-healthy foods. This can be an excellent way to make healthy eating fun - especially if you feel out of place in a kitchen. You will learn many recipes and cooking tips for heart-healthy eating, and have the opportunity to spend time with others who are concerned about heart health. Plus, once you learn to cook healthy and delicious meals, you may find that you enjoy cooking and prefer the taste of healthy low-fat foods more!

6) Plan your cholesterol-lowering meal once a week. Most of us plan our days and our finances, but we often leave eating to chance. This can make heart-healthy eating more difficult. After a long day at work, it can be too daunting to come up with a menu and then cook a meal from scratch. Choose one day a week to plan your entire eating menu and then go shopping for the ingredients you will need for the upcoming week. This will ensure that you have all the fresh ingredients and healthy meal ideas you need, so that there is no excuse to turn to convenience food.

7) Get help in the kitchen. Whether you get help from a roommate, child, or spouse, cooking with someone else tends to be more fun. If you can't find someone to help you, then find some way to make cooking time more fun - listen to music or watch a movie on a portable DVD player as you cook, and cooking time will fly by and you prepare nutritious and cholesterol-lowering meals for yourself.

8) Socialize without food. Many of us take in excess calories and fats when we eat out with others. This is especially a problem since we so often equate social times with eating - we meet friends at restaurants, coffee shops, and pubs or we have movie nights that include take-out pizza.

Over the next 30 days, make it a habit to meet friends at places that don't have food as a major entertainment. Meet friends at the gym, on hiking trails, or in your home rather than in restaurants or cafes that feature rich foods.

9) Get motivated. Getting started on a low-fat diet to lower your cholesterol is often not the hard part. The hard part is staying motivated to keep the diet plan up for weeks. Find ways to get yourself motivated to eat well for life. For many of us, fear is a great motivator.

If you have very high cholesterol, consider pinning your cholesterol level and a list of the dangers of high cholesterol on your fridge. Or, put a really graphic picture of clogged arteries or some cholesterol health hazard you fear where you will see it. You can also make a bet with a friend or family member that will see you lose money each time you cheat on your diet.

10) Make heart-healthy food more convenient. If you can make low-fat alternatives easier to reach for than fast food, you are more likely to reach for meals and foods that are good for you as well as schedule-friendly. Luckily, fruits, vegetables, and other low-fat foods are among the most convenient foods out there.

Keep cut up fruits and vegetables in your refrigerator to make stir-fries, salads, and other healthy meals easier. Keep low-fat yogurt and other low fat foods around for fast snacking, and you will reach for these foods rather than turning to high-fat, high-sodium “fast foods.”

11) Make heart-healthy food more interesting. You are unlikely to be satisfied with eating the same salad or the same types of healthy meals each day. Sticking the same sorts of foods will get you in a rut and will make high-fat alternatives more appealing. Find new low-fat foods that you can enjoy and make it part of your eating plan to look up new low-fat recipes and foods each week so that you are always enjoying foods that are new and healthy for your heart.

12) Figure out your eating dangers and find ways to overcome them. Most of us have specific emotions and events that may make us turn to comfort food. Whether it is general stress, sadness boredom, or meetings with your boss, it is important to find out which events cause you to overeat or to crave fatty foods and then work hard to find alternatives.

Sometimes, this is very simple. If your walk home from work takes you past a favorite restaurant you find hard to resist, then you may need to find a different route home. If Tuesday work meetings leave you reaching for cookies in your office desk, find a way to get out of the meetings or take a walk after the meeting instead of reaching for food.

On a paper, list the times you are more likely to want to eat, and beside each item, list ways you can avoid the situation or at least make better choices when you are faced with it. Post your list in your planner or other visible place so that you will see it.

13) Make cholesterol-friendly eating easier. If counting fat grams, sodium, fiber, types of fat, and cholesterol in each of your foods is causing you stress, either get a small gadget that will count the grams and amounts for you (you can even get programs for your computer or palm pilot that will count this for you) or simplify by eating more of the good stuff and less of the bad. Sound too simple? Not at all.

When you prepare a meal, simply make sure that most of your plate is taken up by fresh fruits and vegetables. The portion size of grain should be smaller and the portion size of animal

proteins (meats, milk products) should be smaller still - no larger than a pack of cards. Make sure that you eat different fruits and vegetables each day so that you get a variety. Use olive oil as your main source of fat and refuse other dressings or sauces - do your cooking with the olive oil.

Eliminate foods such as organ meats, full-fat dairy products, egg yolks, and convenience or restaurant meals entirely, and you should be able to lower your cholesterol significantly without counting every gram you place in your mouth. If you are on a very strict low-cholesterol diet, this may not be enough, but for most people interested in lowering their cholesterol, this simple formula will be a snap to follow and will actually lower your cholesterol.

Over the next 30 days, lower your cholesterol by making sure that reaching for low-fat, heart-healthy foods is more appealing and automatic than reaching for high-fat foods. This will not make your cravings for less-than-healthy meals go away, but it will go a long way towards ensuring that you don't give into the cravings.

Shop for Lower Cholesterol

Where and how you shop can have a huge impact on your cholesterol levels. If you do most of your shopping at the local supermarket, are you often tempted by the foods you see on sale in the aisles - foods such as potato chips and frozen chicken dinners? Do you leave the store with high-fat items that were not on your list? You are not alone.

The many foods and choices available to us when we shop should make it easier to choose healthy items that we enjoy and are good for us, but often the opposite is true. When faced with lots of food choices, many of us find it hard to resist the foods that we know are bad for us. Luckily, relearning to shop can go a long way towards lowering your cholesterol over the next 30 days. For the next 30 days, consider where you shop for food:

1) Greengrocers, farmer's markets, and farmer's stands. These are excellent places to shop, and if you want to lower your cholesterol over the next month, you will want to make it a priority to shop at these types of locations for groceries. Shopping at farmer's markets, farmer's stands, and greengrocers has several advantages:

- You will get a wider variety of very fresh food products than you would get at a grocery store.
- You will support local farmers and enjoy lower prices.
- These places are more environmentally friendly and give you better healthy choices
- These places to shop feature fewer advertisements and convenience foods packed with fats.

If you want to lower your cholesterol and enjoy a lower-fat diet, shopping at your local farmer's market, greengrocer or farmer's stand is an excellent way to get the foods you need to stay healthy.

2) Farms and organic farms. Pick-your-own farms, organic farms, and farms that sell directly to customers offer great value and fresh in-season healthy foods, often at great prices. A few hours at one of these farms can give you some fresh air, exercise, and the foods you need to stay healthy. Visiting these sorts of farms for some of your menu items is a great way to eat more heart-healthy products.

3) Health food stores. Health food stores often have a wide variety of products that are low-fat and animal-protein-free (these products are sometimes called vegan). These stores can be great places to buy dried peas and lentils, herbs, natural products and a wide variety of items that are not available at your grocery store but which are great for your heart health.

4) Grocery stores. Many grocery stores offer a produce section as well as meat and deli sections which feature low-fat products. However, most grocery stores are also filled with high-fat

convenience foods. If you need to shop at a grocery store for all or much of your food, make conscious choices to pick out the healthiest products possible and avoid the aisles or sections of the stores that have high-fat foods.

Tip: When shopping in a grocery store, do your shopping around the perimeter of the store. This is usually where the produce, milk, and meat sections are. Avoid the center aisles, where chips, pop, cookies, and other high-fat foods tend to lurk.

5) Convenience stores. You should avoid shopping in these types of stores unless it is a true emergency. Most convenience stores have higher prices and lots of high-fat and processed foods that are prominently displayed. Healthy foods are often at the back and fresh produce tends to be in less than fresh states. Since these stores are tiny and specialize in “convenience foods,” there is usually very little variety of healthy options available. If you want to lower your cholesterol over the next month, avoid shopping at convenience stores.

6) Cafeterias, cafes and restaurants. Since cafeterias, cafes, and restaurants are businesses, they want to make money by having you enjoy their food enough to purchase more of it. For this reason, these places worry more about taste than about heart-health. High-fat and high-sodium foods are on too many restaurant and cafeteria menus, and if you want to lower your cholesterol, you need to stay away from these places.

If you want to lower your cholesterol over the next thirty days, avoid buying prepared or pre-packaged food, whether from grocery stores or restaurants. Brown-bag your lunch and arrange to meet friends somewhere else besides a restaurant. If you need to eat at a restaurant, choose the smallest portions of the plainest foods available. This is better than ordering the salad, assuming that it will be healthier - a salad packed with bacon bits and cheese can sometimes be among the highest-fat items on a menu!

Instead, choose dishes that seem to have low-fat elements - such as skinless chicken or fruits. Ask for dressings on the side and eat around any high-fat items such as cheese. Avoid cream sauces.

You don't need to completely change the way you shop over the next thirty days in order to lower your cholesterol, but stopping by the farmer's market once a week and avoiding convenience stores and restaurants will make it that much easier to find a terrific variety of fresh heart-healthy foods that you will enjoy eating. After all, how good your diet is depends on the ingredients you put into your food.

How you shop can be as important as where you shop. Taking a few simple steps can make it easier for you to choose foods that will help you lower your cholesterol:

1) Shop for food once a week. Plan your menu for each week ahead of time and select one day a week for food shopping. This will minimize the amount of time you spend thinking about food and will reduce the chances that you forget items or overshop (and overeat).

2) Shop after eating. Shopping on an empty stomach will encourage impulsive buying. Your

willpower will also be at its weakest when you are hungry, making you more likely to reach for fatty comfort-foods.

3) Choose a time to shop when the stores are not too full and the selection is at its height. At farmer's markets and greengrocers, the selection may be best earlier in the day. You can ask your grocery store when their deliveries of produce are scheduled. If you shop when stores are uncrowded and selection is good, you are more likely to have the time to make good choices - and you will be able to enjoy a selection that makes healthy eating easy.

4) Stick to a list. Plan your shopping list -based on your weekly menu - ahead of time and stick to the list to prevent overbuying and overeating. The only exception to this should be fresh fruits and vegetables you see that may make good snacks. You can buy some of these if you find fresh produce that you have not tried before or produce that is one sale. In general, though, buy only what you need each week so that you will have complete meals rather than food that goes bad or invites binging.

Learn to Read Labels

Food labels are something you will have to pay attention to when you go shopping. Manufacturers of foods in North America are required to provide accurate information about their food products. You can find this information on food labels, and most food labels today are made to be easy-to-read. There are several elements to a food label:

- **Identification.** The front of the food label or package will likely tell you the brand of the product and what the product is.
- **Information about the Manufacturer.** Most food packages will tell you where a food was made, who imported it (if the food was imported) and how you can contact the manufacturer or importer. This information can be useful if you want to contact someone about the exact food value content of a product or if you a question or compliant about the food.
- **Codes.** Most food packages contain codes and numbers that contain information about where the product was made and when. Often, expiry dates are listed somewhere among these numbers. It is a good practice to glance at expiry dates of your food to make sure that you are getting fresh food products.
- **Logos, Advertisements, and Claims.** Many foods will have logos or claims on the front of the label or food package. These may contain terms such as "light," "the best," "healthy," "natural," and others. These will likely catch your attention when you are looking for heart-healthy choices. However, you should *never* take this information at face value. Treat these claims as advertisements rather than as facts. Many foods that claim to be "low-cholesterol" are full of saturated fats that are terrible for your cholesterol level. Many foods that claim to be "low fat" still have plenty of fat or have small portion sizes.
- **Ingredients.** This is where the information starts to get really useful. Almost all packaged products have lists of ingredients used in the making of the product. To know how really healthy

a food is, you should start here. Ingredients are listed in order of amount. That means that if a label reads “peanut butter, sugar, chocolate solids”, the product contains mostly peanut butter, with less sugar than peanut butter, and less chocolate solids than sugar. Ingredients listed in brackets are ingredients that are part of something else or contain more information about an ingredient.

For example, if an ingredients list reads “vitamins (thiamin hydrochloride, niacinamide, folic acid)”, then the vitamins in the food consist of thiamin hydrochloride, niacinamide, folic acid. When shopping to lower your cholesterol, always read the ingredients list. Look for foods that contain healthy foods first on the ingredient list (meaning that there are more of these foods) and foods that have ingredient lists that contain few saturated fats.

- **Nutrition Facts.** This is where you need to turn your eyes every time you pick up a food you may want to eat. Even if you can’t read half the ingredients on the ingredient list, even if you are not sure what you are looking for, this is the section of the food label that can help you separate claims from facts.

Food labels in North America now contain a simplified section of information about the food. This is often found on the side of the box or the back of a food package. This part of the label lists portion sizes, the percent or amount of fats, vitamins and other nutrients the food provides, and the amounts of fats and calories the food contains. This is information you can use. Each time that you pick up a food, look at the label. Check the portion size, the amount of fats and the types of fats in the food.

The amount of saturated and trans fats should be very small and the portion size should be large. For example, consider a serving of cream. For a 15 ml serving (one tablespoon) the cream has 1 gram of saturated fats. While the amount of fat is small, the serving is small, too, meaning that the product is actually 8% fat. Soy milk, a much better alternative, has 1 gram of saturated fat in a two cup serving, making it much lower in saturated fat. When making healthy choices, check this part of every food label for the following:

- **Serving Size:** This will tell you whether a food is really healthy or whether it just appears so due to a very tiny portion size.
- **Fat/Lipid:** Look at the gram amounts of trans and saturated fats. The lower the better. The lower the overall amount of fat, the better.
- **Sodium:** Look for foods that contain as little as possible.
- **Calories:** Choosing lower-calorie foods is better for your heart, your cholesterol level, and your overall health.
- **Fiber:** Foods high in fibre are good for your health and cholesterol level.
- **Cholesterol:** Foods that are lower in dietary cholesterol.

•Percentage: The right hand side of many labels will tell you what percentage of the “recommended daily value” the food represents. For example, a product may claim to provide 30% of a day’s recommended daily value of iron. This means that one serving size of the food will give 30% of the fiber you need all day. When shopping for foods, make sure to choose foods that have the lowest percentages for values such as sodium, cholesterol, and fats, and moderate percentages for values such as fiber. This will help ensure that you are making heart-healthy choices.

You may notice that a number of foods do not contain food labels at all. Foods sold in bulk, fresh produce, homemade foods (foods sold at bake sales or at farmer’s stands) and prepared foods in restaurants and cafeterias do not have these labels.

In the case of fresh produce and some bulk foods (dried legumes, lentils, spices) this does not always matter, as you generally know that these foods are healthy and contain no fats, cholesterol, or other harmful elements. On the other hand, no food labels are a good reason to avoid restaurant and take-out meals, as you have no control or choice over how much food you are eating.

If you really want to know how many fats, sodium, fiber, and cholesterol you are eating in foods that come with no label you may want to invest in food guides that estimate how much fat, calories, and other components are in the more common food products.

Some restaurants have even begun to offer ingredient lists and food value information about their meals, but this information is not always easy to find - it is sometimes posted in the kitchen or on the restaurant web page. In the future, it is possible that more restaurants will offer patrons this information so that diners can make more informed decisions about what they eat.

Simplify Your Shopping Cart

Many of us don’t have a lot of time to do food shopping. With our other responsibilities and our crammed schedules, we don’t usually have the time to research our food well before we buy, and our very shopping trips may feel rushed. If that describes you, there is an easy way to make sure that your shopping cart has the foods you need to stay heart healthy:

- 1) Have as much food in there as you think you will need until your next shopping - do not buy more or you may end up overeating.
- 2) Most of your cart should include fresh fruits and vegetables (this will include fresh herbs). Yes, you read that right. If you make most of your diet fresh fruits and vegetables, you will enjoy lower cholesterol.
- 3) You should have less (significantly less) grains than vegetables and fruits. These should be simple (not prepared or pre-seasoned or flavored) and whole grain where possible. Check the labels on your breads and baked products, at least, to make sure that you are getting as little fat and sodium in these products as possible. Favor grains like oat and barley over white breads.

Avoid bakery products like cookies and sweets entirely or buy very, very few (one cookie instead of a package, and check that one cookie that has no trans or saturated fats). Include at least some nuts (unsalted, unflavored, not roasted).

4) Check to make sure that you have significantly less meats and animal proteins than you have grains. Those meats you have should be lean where possible. Choose fish, shellfish, and poultry over other meats and choose the leanest cuts of meat you can. Buy less meat than you usually buy and buy it as plain as possible (avoid seasoned, precooked, prepared, or processed meats such as sausages).

5) You should have very little fats at all, and those should be healthy. Choose extra virgin olive oil and refuse to buy hydrogenated oils, palm oils, or any oils high in saturated or trans fats (read the labels).

6) Try to eliminate as many packaged foods as you can. Anything that has been cooked, processed and prepared for you ahead of time or contains flavorings or seasonings should be given a second look. These packages are usually quite easy to find in your shopping cart - they are usually bright colors and contain logos and brand names. These should form the smallest portion of your shopping cart. Your cholesterol will fall even more quickly if you eliminate them entirely. At the very least, read the levels of these products to choose the products with the lowest sodium and fat levels possible.

Checking your shopping cart takes only a few minutes and following only these six simple steps will put you much further along towards lowering your cholesterol.

Shopping Cheat Sheet

When you go shopping, take the following list along with you to prompt you to make good food choices:

Good Food Bets:

whole grain cereals, oats, and cereals that have psyllium and flaxseed

Any types of fruits

Grains such as quinoa, barley, hominy, millet, amaranth, bulgur, cous cous,

Nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts, soy, also lives - all with no additives like salt and all untoasted)

Dried legumes, beans, peas, lentils

Vegetables of all kinds (fresh where possible, but frozen is fine too)

Soybean products such as tofu and soy milk

Whole wheat, rye, pumpernickel bread (look for low-salt varieties and check levels of fats first)

Tortillas

Whole grain pita breads and crackers (make sure to get low-salt varieties and check fat amounts)

Fresh garlic and herbs, dried spices and herbs

Low-sodium salsa or spicy sauce

Low fat and low sodium soup base or stock

Low sodium pasta sauce

Lean meats and chicken
Fish
Olive oil
Low fat dairy products
Egg whites
Rice and pastas
Popcorn that can be air-popped
Water
Real fruit juice

Avoid, be wary of, or buy very little of (at the very least find lower-fat alternatives):

Whole eggs
Whole milk products
Red meat that is fatty (looks marbled)
Organ meats
Processed or prepared foods (heat and serve foods or sandwich meats and sausages)
granola or museli cereals (many contain lots of fats)
Sports drinks, sodas, fruit “beverages” (many are high in salts as well as sugars)

watch out for these ingredients or food values on food labels:

Sodium, salt
Eggs and egg products
Shortening, hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil (these are high in trans fats)
Fats (especially trans fats, saturated fats, and others)

Cholesterol-Lowering Treatments and Drugs

If your doctor has determined that you have heightened levels of bad cholesterol, he or she will likely make some suggestions about things you may do in order to improve your health. Some of these suggestions will have to do with diet and lifestyle changes. However, if your cholesterol is quite high or you require an aggressive approach to lowering cholesterol, you may be advised to take certain medications or treatments in order to lower your cholesterol. It is important that you know something about the treatments and remedies that are available now to lower cholesterol, as this will help you to work with your health practitioner to develop a cholesterol treatment regimen that can work for you.

Healthy Cholesterol through Herbal and Natural Remedies

Research is providing good evidence that there several effective natural herbs and supplements to help lower LDL and raise HDL or "good" cholesterol. This research has been done in lab settings. If you visit a naturopath or health care practitioner who specializes in alternative medicines, you may be advised to try some of these treatments. If you are worried about the side effects of pharmaceutical cholesterol-lowering drugs or testaments, you may wish to speak with your doctor about drug-free ways to lower cholesterol or you may wish to ask for a recommendation for a natural health practitioner.

Considering alternative remedies gives those dealing with higher levels of cholesterol new options. It is especially good for those who do not react well to traditional pharmaceutical cholesterol-lowering medications.

Guggul gum resin from the mukul myrrh tree is used to treat obesity. This same remedy is used to help lower cholesterol and decrease blood pressure. Guggul is also named Gugulipid and Gum guggulu. The botanical name is Commiphora mukul. Guggul is used to lower elevated cholesterol and triglycerides. The active ingredients are resin, volatile oils, and gum.

Policosanol is considered to be a safe and effective treatment to lower LDL cholesterol. While preventing oxidation of LDL cholesterol it promotes normal blood flow. It comes from sugar cane wax and has been studied in-depth for some 10 years. Human trials are published in North American and International medical journals.

Pantethine is also a very promising cholesterol-lowering substance. It has significantly reduced serum triglycerides, total cholesterol, and LDL_cholesterol or "bad cholesterol" levels. It increases HDL or "good cholesterol" levels in several clinical trials. Pantethine has the further advantage of not producing the undesirable side effects of synthetic lipid lowering drugs.

Curcumin is also very promising. It is a very strong antioxidant with antiviral, anti-inflammatory, anticancer, and cholesterol lowering properties. Curcumin is an extract from the every day kitchen spice Turmeric and has a number of health benefits.

Garlic has been proven effective by a standard double-blind placebo controlled study. At 900 mg daily garlic will significantly slow the development of atherosclerosis (You can read about this study in the journal article: Koscielny J, Klussendorf D, Latza R, et al. The antiatherosclerotic effect of *Allium sativum*. *Atherosclerosis*. 1999;144:237–249).

As an added benefit, garlic has been proven beneficial in fighting off the common cold. It can also add flavor to meals. If you want to enjoy flavorful low-fat meals, using garlic rather than salt or fats will help you stay healthy. Many health experts consider garlic to be a super-food that is generally beneficial for overall good health.

Omega 3/Fish Oil has been shown to be beneficial for heart health and brain function. Dr. Fran Hu of the Harvard School of Public Health has published studies that suggest that high consumption of fish (4_5 times a week) cuts the risk of women dying from heart disease by 45 percent compared to women who rarely ate fish.

Men with the highest levels of omega_3 fatty acids have an 81 percent lower risk of dying suddenly than men with the lowest levels. The fat in fish lowers cholesterol, helps prevent blood clots that form in heart attacks and lessens the chances for the irregular heart beats that cause sudden deaths. One gram daily of an omega_3 fatty acid supplement will reduce risk of sudden cardiac death by 42 percent.

Beta_Sitosterol when taken at 300 mgs twice a day will help to lower blood serum cholesterol and triglycerides, even with few diet changes and little or no exercise.

Psyllium seeds are a common ingredient in bulk laxative products. Studies have shown that psyllium can lower LDL cholesterol. This study showed improvement for both children and adults.

Soy Protein benefits heart health. To achieve the best results, eat at least four servings of 6.25 grams of soy protein or 25 grams per day. For those with high cholesterol levels of 260_300, soy protein will reduce cholesterol by 15_25%. Countries that enjoy diets rich in soy proteins - and this includes countries such as Japan - have populations that suffer less from cancers, heart disease, and high cholesterol.

Women in countries that have soy-rich diets seem to be less affected by osteoporosis and other dangers of menopause. In fact, the countries that have traditional diets high in soy have populations that seem to enjoy longer and healthier lives. This has lead many researchers to investigate the potential benefits of soy, and many research studies have found that soy proteins seem to contribute to good heart health and good overall health.

Other remedies believed to help reduce LDL cholesterol include:

- Vitamin E and C
- Green Tea

- Licorice Extract
- Aspirin (80 mg a couple of times per week)
- Extra Virgin Oil (1 tablespoon daily)

Herbs and other natural medicines and treatments are best recommend by natural or holistic specialists and many conventional doctors and specialists may not know a lot about herbal remedies. Some that do may not believe in their healing properties. Your doctor may be able to recommend a natural health practitioner, as this field gains increasing credibility in the medical world. However, you may need to seek out a natural or holistic specialist yourself. This can be challenging, as there are fewer professional bodies regulating these experts. To make sure that you find an expert who can really help you, try the following:

- 1) Ask for recommendations from friends and family, especially if they have had success with holistic experts in treating heart and cholesterol issues.
- 2) Look for holistic specialists that have some formal training and certification. Many holistic trainers now have medical degrees as well as some training in holistic medicine. Some even do research work. These sorts of holistic practitioners may be harder to find, but they are well worth finding, as their advanced training will help ensure that you get good healing treatment.
- 3) Always speak to holistic practitioners in a pre-interview before agreeing to accept their services. During this pre-interview, make sure that the natural practitioners listen to you, have a good knowledge of medicine and seem to be qualified. Ask for references. Be wary of natural practitioners that make grandiose claims, seem to advertise one brand of products heavily, offer advice that contradicts basic knowledge about human health, or practitioners that are vague or unhelpful when answering your questions.
- 4) Even your doctor does not agree with natural medicine, make sure that he or she knows which natural treatments you are taking. Natural and herbal products may still interact with your other medication or you may develop allergies to specific products or treatments. Keeping your doctor informed will make it easier for your doctor to help you.
- 5) Always ask for detailed labels or ingredient lists for all natural or holistic medicines or treatments you take. Read these carefully to make sure that you are not allergic to any of the ingredients. Also be sure to check the non-medicinal ingredients in your natural medicines.

It is important to not self doctor as herbs are potent and some people will react negatively to some herbs. Herbs and plant-based substances can be allergens and can still produce side effects, reactions, and interactions with other medicines. Herbs are not recommended as alternatives to conventional medicine without professional guidance. Always consult with a trained professional for best results.

Pharmaceutical Medicines and Treatments for Cholesterol

If your doctor has found that you have high cholesterol, you will likely be advised to follow a low saturated fat and low cholesterol diet. You will also be told to exercise more and maintain a healthy body weight. Many doctors will encourage you to try these diet and lifestyle changes first because they have been proven most effective in controlling cholesterol and because cholesterol-lowering medications are strong drugs that may have side effects.

If after a number of months these diet and lifestyle changes have not lowered your cholesterol sufficiently, though, your doctor may suggest more aggressive treatment, which may include cholesterol-lowering medication.

If you have been advised by your doctor to take cholesterol-lowering medication, you will certainly want to understand your medication and the other cholesterol medication choices available to you. This will allow you to make better informed choices about your treatment. In general, the most popular cholesterol-lowering medications used today include:

- **Statins**

Statins are drugs that work by constraining the enzyme HMG_CoA reductase. This enzyme regulates how quickly cholesterol is produced in the body. By slowing this enzyme, statins are able to lower LDL_cholesterol levels more effectively than many other cholesterol drugs currently on the market.

In fact, some studies have suggested that these cholesterol-lowering drugs can lower bad cholesterol by up to 60%, which can be very good news for people with severely elevated LDL-cholesterol. Some studies have also shown that Statins may contribute to lowering triglyceride levels and even slightly increasing HDL_cholesterol levels.

All these benefits make statins among the most commonly used drugs for lowering cholesterol. The Statins most used today are pravastatin, fluvastatin, lovastatin, simvastatin, and atorvastatin.

If you take statins to lower your cholesterol, you can expect to see results in a few weeks. You will have to take your medications at night, with food. Although statins have fewer side effects than many other cholesterol-lowering drugs, some patients experience cramps, gas, stomach upset, constipation and other digestive problems.

In many cases, these symptoms go away by themselves or at least become less severe as the body adjusts to the statins. In some case, your doctor may suggest taking a lower dosage in order to control side effects. More serious complications from statins include the risks of muscle problems and liver problems. These complications are quite rare in patients who take statins, but if you notice any pain or unusual symptoms while taking statins, you will want to seek medical help right away.

• **Bile Acid Sequestrants**

Bile acid sequestrants such as cholestyramine, colestipol, and colesevelam attach themselves to the bile acids in the intestine that contain cholesterol. The body then can get rid of the cholesterol in bowel movements rather than absorbing it. These drugs, even in small doses, can lower LDL_cholesterol a moderate amount - by up to 20% in many patients. Since these drugs lower cholesterol only a modest amount, they are often combined with statins for more effective treatment of high cholesterol.

If you take these drugs to lower your cholesterol, you must take them with water or fruit juice and with food. If you take other medication, you will have to be careful to take those medications one hour before or several hours after the acid bile sequestrants, as these cholesterol-lowering medications may affect how other drugs are absorbed by your body. Your doctor will have to advise you when to take your other medications to ensure that these cholesterol medications do not affect your treatment of other health conditions.

Usually, bile acid sequestrates are prescribed in doses meant to be taken once or twice a day. If you take these cholesterol-lowering medications, you need to drink plenty of water, as many patients experience unpleasant symptoms such as gas, nausea, constipation, and feeling of bloating when taking bile acid sequestrants.

• **Nicotinic Acid**

Nicotinic acid is also called niacin. It is a vitamin that increases HDL-cholesterol while lowering triglycerides, LDL-cholesterol, and total cholesterol when taken in large amounts. In fact, this medication can reduce bad cholesterol levels by up to 20%. In many cases, patients are started on small doses of nicotinic acid and have their dosage slowly raised to heighten the cholesterol-fighting power of this medication.

Patients who take this medication need to have careful doctor supervision, since nicotinic acid can have a number of serious side effects, including hot flashes, interactions with high blood pressure medicine, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, indigestion, gas, liver problems, gout, and high blood sugar. If you have other medical conditions your doctor may decide that nicotinic acid is too risky because of these possible side effects.

Nicotinic acid can be taken with meals to reduce side effects such as hot flashes and some doctor even suggest that patients combine the drug with aspirin or another drug for the same reason.

• **Fibrates**

Fibrates decrease triglyceride levels and raise HDL-cholesterol. They are less effective in lowering LDL-cholesterol and for this reason are used more often by people who have heart disease rather than high cholesterol. However, in some cases, they are given in conjunction with cholesterol-lowering drugs to keep a patient's heart healthy while lowering cholesterol to acceptable levels. Fibrates that are often prescribed to lower cholesterol include drugs such as Gemfibrozil.

Usually, Fibrates are taken in the morning and at night, about half an hour before eating. Among the most common side effects of these drugs are stomach ailments, a higher risk of gallstones, and an effect on medications being taken to thin the blood. If you are taking medications intended to thin the blood, your doctor will want to take special precautions if you are also being prescribed fibrates.

• **Hormone Replacement Therapy**

Hormone replacement therapy is a hormone therapy meant to treat the symptoms and health effects caused by menopause in women. It usually involves taking estrogen or a combination of estrogen and progestin. This is meant to offset the risks that occur when women's production of estrogen drops after menopause. Among the effects of hormone replacement therapy is a lowering of bad cholesterol levels, which often rise in post-menopausal women. Among the other benefits of hormone therapy is a reduction in instances of hot flashes and a reduced risk of osteoporosis and heart disease - some of the most common risks to menopausal and post-menopausal women.

However, some experts disagree whether hormone replacement therapy is as effective as cholesterol-lowering drugs in reducing bad cholesterol-levels in women. To make things even more complicated, hormone replacement therapy has also come under fire for adding to the risk of some cancers, as well as gallbladder disease and blood clots as well as other potential risks. Women should speak to their doctors about the risks and potential benefits of hormone replacement therapy in order to determine whether the treatment is appropriate for them.

• **Other drugs**

Some doctors may prescribe drugs meant to offset or treat heart disease as well as lower cholesterol. Some doctors, for example, may suggest that patients take obesity medications instead of cholesterol-lowering medications because obesity may be perceived to be responsible for higher cholesterol. In many cases, if any underlying condition may be causing the elevated cholesterol, that condition may be treated to improve cholesterol levels as well as overall health.

It is important to remember that cholesterol-lowering medications are not a complete solution in themselves. Even if you are taking doctor-prescribed cholesterol medication, you will still need to:

- Control conditions such as diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure, and other health aspects that may affect your cholesterol and heart health
- Follow a diet that is healthy, low in salt and saturated fats, and low in food cholesterol
- Follow a good exercise regimen
- Lose weight if you are not at your ideal weight

These heart-healthy choices may reduce or eliminate your need of cholesterol-lowering medications. Even if they do not, by following these simple steps you will help your medication work more effectively, ensuring that your cholesterol is under control more quickly and effectively. Cholesterol medication alone does not usually work to reduce bad cholesterol levels and increase good cholesterol levels. Your best plan for that is to follow a lifestyle that is healthy.

Good News on Cholesterol

Dr. Nicolas Duverger of Gencell in France along with Dr. Caroline Desurmont of Institut Pasteur in Paris are conducting studies associated with gene therapy. In addition to their hope to find a good solution to reducing high cholesterol, they are also studying the elimination of fatty plaques associated with "hardening of the arteries."

In the future, medical research being done now may provide more effective solutions to elevated cholesterol levels. In the meantime, however, there are a number of ways you can use today's newest products and innovations to lower your cholesterol.

To effectively lower high cholesterol there are a number of key lifestyle changes that can be made, especially to your food and diet. There are several new products and innovations that can help you with this goal:

- Fats/ Margarine

If you can become accustomed to a lower fat diet you will be well on your way to better health.

New Products to Watch for include:

- Benecol® margarine will lower cholesterol by some 10% when used as recommended. It contains sterols derived from pine tree wood pulp, elements which research suggests could help those with high cholesterol. This margarine will not affect your HDL or "good" cholesterol.
- Take Control® margarine and salad dressings are made from plant sterols so are soy based. These contain sterols which block cholesterol. These sterols have been found to help lower cholesterol levels (bad cholesterol) even in those patients who are already taking statins as cholesterol-lowering drugs.

Nuts such as almonds pecans and walnuts have high amounts of monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fat so this helps to lower cholesterol. New studies have suggested that eating nuts - and especially the almonds with the skins - may be beneficial for those who have elevated cholesterol. In fact, if you want to lower your cholesterol, get more of your daily fat intake from fats and less fat intake from animal proteins.

- Oats and Barley have a soluble fiber known as Beta Glucan and this is key to lowering cholesterol. To gain the best cholesterol lowering effects consume from two to four cups of dry oats or barley daily. New research about barley and oats has suggested that these two foods may be beneficial in helping those with high cholesterol.

- Fruits and Vegetables including apples, citrus fruit, berries, carrots, apricots, cabbage and sweet potatoes are very high in soluble fiber and pectin. Eat at least five servings a day for good heart health. Many studies have repeatedly proven that fresh fruits and vegetables are excellent for maintaining overall good health and preventing many serious illnesses.

- Flaxseeds contain alpha_linolenic acid a polyunsaturated fat which has been shown in recent research studies to lower cholesterol while providing needed soluble fiber.

- Olive Oil has been shown to effectively lower blood cholesterol. Extra virgin olive oil is considered to offer the best results. Using olive oil rather than animal fats can help lower your cholesterol and improve overall health.

- Fish that contains omega_3 polyunsaturated fatty acids prevents blood from clotting and lowers blood cholesterol. Research also suggests that omega-3 is good for brain function and overall good health.

- When preparing foods adapt to healthful baking, roasting and grilling. Go for the low fat cooking oil sprays. Coat your pan to sear in the juices rather than frying.

- Limit the use of egg yolks by using one egg white only for every egg yolk enjoyed. You won't easily notice any difference and you will enjoy your egg preparations just the same.

- Adapt to 1% milk and then to skim milk for best in health. Try the soy and rice milks and also for cheese, sour cream and ice cream alternatives. These make delicious healthful choices. Try your local health food store, where many vegan alternatives - including no-milk substitutes are abundant.

How Changes in Your Lifestyle can Affect Cholesterol

Eating differently and getting doctor-supervised cholesterol treatment will help lower your cholesterol. However, to stay heart healthy and or lower your cholesterol in the next thirty days, you will need to make some changes to your way of life in order to reap the maximum benefits. Luckily, a few easy-to-make changes are all that is needed to start reaping big cholesterol-lowering benefits:

1) Exercise. Your heart is a muscle, and like any muscle, it gets stronger with exercise. You can protect your heart - even if you have high cholesterol - by exercising a little each day or every few days. A simple twenty minute walk can do wonders. You may also want to indulge and join a gym to make exercise more automatic. Try to find exercise that gets your heart working but which is not too strenuous.

Always make sure that you speak with your doctor before starting an exercise regimen (you may need to ease into a regimen if you are out of shape) and always choose an exercise that you will enjoy so that you stick with it. Some people find that varying their exercise routine and trying new forms of exercise make it easier to stay motivated. Consider trying walking, hiking, swimming, exercising with a video tape, yoga, horseback riding, bicycling, jogging, rollerblading, ice skating, skiing, rowing, or other activities that are low-impact and heart-healthy.

2) Reduce salt. Sodium products can cause hypertension and other conditions that are dangerous for those who already suffer from high cholesterol. Start paying attention to how much salt you add to foods and how much fat is contained in the foods you eat. You will be amazed at how much salt is added to your food. You likely don't even notice the salt in your meals, since a taste for salt is cumulative - the more salt you eat, the more you crave and the more salt it takes for you to enjoy your food. In fact, once you have lowered your salt intake for a few months, you will likely notice that much of the food you used to like is far too salty!

Many food critics claim that the high sodium content in the North American diet comes from the fact that we eat so many foods that are not very high quality or very flavorful in themselves. You can cut out the salt in your diet by choosing foods that are naturally high in flavor. You can also add flavor by adding raspberry vinegar, fresh herbs, peppercorns, and vegetables broth (sodium-reduced or homemade with no salt) to food. These same flavoring can be used instead of fat for a healthier meal. You can also find salt-free and sodium-reduced products at your grocery store and local health store. These make a nice alternative to your usual high-salt products.

3) Maintain your proper body weight. Keeping your body at its ideal size will help control cholesterol.

4) Drink water. Doctors agree that keeping yourself healthy by drinking lots of water is an important part of keeping your body functioning well overall. Besides this, though, drinking

water will make you feel full so that you don't overeat and drinking water instead of high-salt and high-sugar drinks will keep you healthier.

5) Stop smoking. It slightly increases your cholesterol and puts a terrible strain on your heart and lungs. You simply cannot be heart-healthy if you smoke.

6) Don't be afraid to add a glass of wine to your dinner once or twice a week. Research suggests that alcohol in moderate amounts can help to lower bad cholesterol levels and raise good cholesterol levels. Some research has also suggested that some forms of alcohol may reduce the risks of coronary disease and may even act as antioxidants.

This does not mean that you should take up drinking, however - other measures will have equally cholesterol-lowering qualities, without you having to consume alcohol. Just don't assume that you must cut alcohol from your diet to lower cholesterol.

If you are taking cholesterol or other medications, though, make sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist whether the medication will react with alcohol. Also be aware that drinking more than one drink a day will not lower your cholesterol levels and may prove more harmful than beneficial.

7) Watch out for coffee. Some studies have suggested that coffee may contribute slightly to higher levels of bad cholesterol while having no effects on good cholesterol levels. If you can't give up coffee, at least make sure that you drink filtered coffee, as many studies have suggested that it is the coffee oils in coffee that may lead to elevated cholesterol levels. Also, do your best to cut back on coffee and drink it with non-fat or low-fat milk products.

Coffee - whether filtered or not - has been shown to have detrimental effects on overall health and the fats in coffee cream will certainly not help you with your goal of lowering bad cholesterol levels.

5) Start an herb garden. Whether you grow a small herb garden in your yard or in a window box, having fresh herbs on hand can help you reduce the amount of animal fats and salt you add to your foods. Fresh herbs can add plenty of flavor to your low-fat cooking and most contain a number of nutrients that are good for your overall health. Plus, studies have shown that living in an apartment or home with live plants is good for your general health.

6) It sounds trite, but staying positive and happy with your life can reduce stress levels (which are detrimental to your heart) and can encourage you to take the steps you need to lead a full and active life. Plus, changing your lifestyle and eating habits in response to high cholesterol can be emotionally draining.

Making an effort to look after your emotional health can make this process less daunting. If your emotions and moods swing wildly as you adjust to a cholesterol-lowering lifestyle and diet, seek out a therapist or speak with your doctor to find help.

Your Doctor, Your Cholesterol, and You

If you want to lower your bad cholesterol in the next thirty days and experience a lifetime of good health, you need to work effectively with health care professionals, including your doctor, nurses, pharmacists, and (possibly) nutritionists, dieticians, holistic practitioners, and lipid specialists.

Communicating effectively with your doctors and care givers is very important, since you need to give them information about your condition and symptoms which may help them treat you. However, in today's world, where many doctors and care givers are rushed and overworked, it can be difficult to communicate in the time your doctor appointment may take.

You can make it easier to communicate with health care workers by choosing the correct ones. Choose a doctor and specialists you feel comfortable with and trust. These professional should have credentials that make you feel that you are in good hands and should also genuinely listen to what you have to say.

If you feel that your concerns are not being taken seriously, there is no reason why you shouldn't find a health care professional who will listen and give you the care you need. Ask friends and family members for their recommendations or ask for a referral for a second opinion.

Once you have found a doctor that you trust, don't stop there. Ask questions often and from as many people as you can. Ask friends and family members about their experiences with high cholesterol, ask the nurses who take blood samples about the procedures of lab tests, take the pamphlets and booklets that are offered for free at many clinics.

The more professionals and people you ask and the more information you gather, the better you will be able to use your time with your doctor, since you will know the basics and will be able to ask directed and focused questions in the time you have with your doctor.

As you work to lower your cholesterol over the next 30 days, work to understand all you can about cholesterol and cholesterol treatments. Research and knowledge will make you more able to take the steps you need to lower your cholesterol.

Come prepared for appointments. Do your research ahead of time, so that you do not spend the limited time you have with health care professionals asking basic questions such as "what is cholesterol" which you can find elsewhere. Spend the time with your doctor raising concerns, asking for cholesterol information that is relevant to your particular case, and getting instructions.

One excellent way to be prepared to speak with your doctor is to keep a journal about your heart health and cholesterol. Once your doctor determines that you have elevated levels of bad cholesterol, buy a plain notebook. In it, keep the facts and information you find about your medication, cholesterol, and treatments.

Note down important contact numbers - including contact information for your doctor. Keep track of all the things you do each day - including diet, exercise, and medical treatments - that may affect your cholesterol. In each day's entry, also note any unusual symptoms or concerns you may have. Keep a running list of questions you may want to ask your doctor at your next appointment. Note the progress you are making. Bring this journal with you when you visit your doctor. It will prove invaluable to your health care professionals in helping you develop a form of treatment that works for you.

Keeping a journal of your eating, exercise, lifestyle changes, and cholesterol-lowering progress is an important step as you lower your cholesterol over the next 30 days.

The most important thing about keeping lines of communication open with your doctor is to keep trying. Show up for appointments, voice your ideas, and follow the directions your doctor gives you.

If you are having trouble following a specific cholesterol-lowering treatment - whether it is because of side effects or lack of motivation - be frank with your doctor about this. Your doctor needs to understand what you are not doing that may be affecting your treatment. Often, your health care professional will be able to give you some tips for making the treatment more realistic for you or may be able to offer an alternative treatment for controlling your cholesterol.

Always be sure to tell your doctor about all medication, herbal treatments, vitamins, and over the counter products you are taking. These can affect your cholesterol medication and can also affect some medical tests.

Doctor Question Checklist

There are certain questions that you need to have answered about your condition over the next 30 days. Whether you get the answers to these questions from your doctor or from another reputable health care professional, if you want to effectively lower your cholesterol, it is important that you understand the answers to the following questions:

- What exactly am I being treated for and what is my condition and prognosis right now?

Never assume that high bad cholesterol is what you are being treated for primarily. Your doctor may be more worried about another condition that is related to high cholesterol - such as obesity, for example - and may be focusing on that in order to help you achieve health.

Understanding what you are being treated for can help you understand what you should be focusing on. Getting the exact numbers and figures related to your condition - such as the actual cholesterol levels - can also help you keep track of your progress as you make the change you need to make to become healthier.

- What are the details of the medications I am taking?

Get a list of the medications and treatments you are taking (including full names) as well as their risks, their side effects, and exactly how they should be taken. Ask about any ingredients or medications these drugs could react with, how these drugs should be taken (on an empty stomach, with food, or at specific times of the day?) and find out how the drugs should be stored.

Many pharmacies now provide complete print-outs that tell you all about the medications you are taking. It is well worth your while to seek out a pharmacy or pharmacist that can give you detailed information about your cholesterol-lowering drugs and can answer all your questions about your medications. Find out what you are supposed to do if you forget a dose or experience side effects.

- What symptoms should I be looking for that indicate that I should seek help right away?

Medication and treatments for high bad cholesterol carry risks, and having higher cholesterol carries its own risks as well. Knowing which symptoms indicate that you need to seek medical help fast - and knowing where to seek that help - can save your life. Write down the symptoms you need to stay alert for and carefully write down what you need to do if you experience specific symptoms. Review this until you know it.

- What are the steps I need to take to improve my condition?

Your doctor can recommend specific steps and instructions that you can follow to improve your health. Whether it is a specific diet or a special treatment, knowing what is expected of you is important. Write these down as goals to be met.

- What diet and exercise steps are right for me?

While a low-fat diet and moderate exercise can help lower cholesterol, your doctor can recommend specific routines that can address specific issues in your medical history. If you have diabetes or food allergies, for example, your doctor can help you determine exactly what exercise and diet plan may be right for you.

If you have illnesses such as diabetes or other health issues that may affect your diet and exercise, this is an especially important question to ask as you start making changes to lower your cholesterol.

- What amounts of sodium, fat, cholesterol, calories, and other elements should I be eating each day?

Based on your medical profile, your doctor can tell you exactly how much of what you should be eating, which can make it easier for you to tell what you should be eating - and in what portion sizes.

- Who else can I talk to and what other resources are open to me?

Most doctors are aware of lots of resources, including books, pamphlets, support groups, and

other specialists that can help you lower your cholesterol and help you make the choices you need to make.

- Am I a candidate for other cholesterol treatments or for other tests?

Understanding which other treatments and tests may help you - in the future, if not right now - can help you see the options you have for treating your high cholesterol. Often, by getting your doctor to explain why you are getting specific medication, you can better understand your overall health situation.

- What are my most recent test results?

Again, write these down so that you can see your progress and evaluate where your health is now.

- What's next?

Before you leave your doctor's office, you should always know what you should be doing next to improve your cholesterol levels and your health. Whether it is scheduling a follow-up appointment or waiting for the results of another test, make sure that you know what the next step of your treatment is.

Myths about Cholesterol that May be Affecting Your Health

There are many myths out there about cholesterol. If you believe any of the following misconceptions and misinformation, you may be making uninformed choices that can sabotage your chances of lowering your cholesterol:

- Cholesterol Myth: I follow a good diet, so I don't need to get tested for my cholesterol levels.

People who are overweight and consistently choose high-fat and processed foods (which are high in trans and saturated fats) may well have elevated levels of cholesterol. However, there are other risk factors to consider. People who eat well may also have heightened cholesterol in some cases. You should be tested for cholesterol if you:

- Are older. Cholesterol levels may rise with age.
 - Are a woman who has gone through menopause. Lowered estrogen levels after menopause have been linked to higher levels of bad cholesterol.
 - Are a smoker. Smoking is a danger to heart health and may affect cholesterol levels.
 - Are sedentary. Lack of exercise has a detrimental effect on cardiac health and cholesterol.
 - Are someone whose family has a history of heart disease and/or high cholesterol. High cholesterol in some cases is genetically determined.
 - Suffer from alcoholism. Alcoholism has been linked to heightened levels of triglycerides and heart disease. Getting a cholesterol profile can help determine if your heart is at risk.
- Cholesterol Myth: I'm young, so there is no need to worry about cholesterol.

Many risk factors affect cholesterol. A family history of heart disease, obesity, lack of exercise, and poor eating habits may cause even young adults to develop dangerously high cholesterol.

- Cholesterol Myth: I'm on cholesterol medication, so my cholesterol is decreasing.

Cholesterol medication should never be seen as an instant solution to high cholesterol. It is always meant to be used in conjunction with a healthy eating plan and heart-healthy lifestyle to achieve full effect.

In fact, many doctors will not even prescribe cholesterol-lowering medication unless a patient has tried to lower their cholesterol with healthy eating and exercise and has had no success with reduced cholesterol that way. Keep in mind that even the most potent cholesterol-lowering medications take several weeks to work and may lower cholesterol only by 20%. Plus, many of these strong drugs have unpleasant or even dangerous side effects.

For these reasons, diet and lifestyle should be your first defense against high cholesterol and medications should only be used to complement or supplement these positive changes in your life.

- Cholesterol Myth: Buying “low-fat” and “cholesterol-free” foods will help me keep my cholesterol down or will help me lower my cholesterol.

Many products labeled “cholesterol-free,” “light” or “fat free” are still high in trans and saturated fats or contain more fats than healthier food alternatives.

For example, it is possible that sandwich meats - a highly processed food - is labeled as “light” to suggest that it has less calories than the regular product, but this food is still likely to contain all sorts of unhealthy fats and ingredients that are unhealthy for your heart.

If you want to choose foods that are good for you, choose foods that are low in fats in general and foods that are low in trans, saturated and hydrogenated fats in particular. Eating fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, lean meats and fish is always healthier for you than eating processed foods that claim to be “light” or even “cholesterol-free.”

- Cholesterol Myth: Eating margarine instead of butter will lower your cholesterol.

All fats can contribute to raised cholesterol levels, and you especially need to be aware of saturated, trans, and hydrogenated fats. There are actually a number of margarines that contain these types of fats. To truly lower your cholesterol, you must decrease the total amounts of fat you eat and choose fats that are lower in trans and saturated fats.

Choosing margarine will not automatically help you lower your cholesterol. Choosing a margarine that is low in saturated and trans fats and is not hydrogenated - and then eating smaller quantities of that margarine - may be beneficial for your heart health and your cholesterol level. Choosing to use small quantities of very good extra virgin olive oil instead of margarine may be even better for your heart and cholesterol.

- Cholesterol Myth: High cholesterol only affects men.

Until menopause, it is true that women tend to have lower levels of bad cholesterol levels. However, women who have a number of cholesterol and heart disease risk factors (these include genetics, obesity, lack of exercise, poor food choices, smoking, and alcoholism) may still have levels of elevated cholesterol.

After menopause, women actually often experienced higher levels of bad cholesterol. In fact, many women who have experienced menopause find that they experience high levels of bad cholesterol that diet and exercise alone can't fix. If you are a pre-menopausal woman with risk factors for high cholesterol or heart disease, get a cholesterol profile done. After menopause, women should have their cholesterol levels checked regularly.

- Cholesterol Myth: Eating eggs is not bad for you because dietary cholesterol does not matter as much as people once thought.

This myth is both true and false. Eggs yolks contain high levels of dietary cholesterol, so that one egg contains about 213 milligrams of cholesterol (keep in mind that for most healthy people

the limit for cholesterol consumption is about 300 milligrams daily). While it is true that more recent research has suggested that eating saturated fats does more to heighten bad cholesterol levels than dietary cholesterol, eating large quantities of dietary cholesterol is also damaging to cholesterol levels.

If your cholesterol levels are very high, your daily allotted intake of dietary intake may not allow you to eat even one egg a day. Even if you are generally healthy, if you wish to enjoy more eggs you will have to take extra caution to limit your levels of dietary cholesterol in your other foods.

In general, you do not want to think of foods as “bad” or “good”, as most foods can be part of your diet, however if you have high cholesterol, you will want to be careful about your consumption of eggs or switch to egg whites only.

- Cholesterol Myth: I feel healthy and my doctor has not brought up the subject of cholesterol with me, so I must have good cholesterol.

There are no physical signs of high cholesterol. Sadly, for too many people, the first sign of high cholesterol or heart problems is a heart attack or stroke. You need to take matters into your own hands and not rely on a doctor or any symptoms to determine your cholesterol level.

Instead, take steps to eat healthy foods and exercise no matter how healthy you think you may be and get your cholesterol tested if you have any risk factors associated with heightened cholesterol.

Good Cholesterol Resources

There are a number of places you will want to check in order to find more help with lowering your cholesterol. Consider the following resources:

- 1) **Your library.** Your library will have many resources that can help you with lowering your cholesterol. From library books about cholesterol to cookbooks that feature heart-friendly recipes, the library should be one of your first stops when you are looking for resources
- 2) **Your hospital or clinic.** Whether it is research studies that allow you to try new treatments for cholesterol-lowering, pamphlets about cholesterol, or experts that can answer all your questions, clinics and hospitals are a great place to find the information you need to stay healthy.
- 3) **Professional groups.** You can contact the National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics of the American Dietetic Association if you need a registered dietitian to help you in choosing the right foods. You can also contact groups such as the American Heart Association or the Canadian Heart and Stroke Association for Cholesterol-healthy tips and eating guidelines and for more information about cholesterol and heart health.

These organizations also host fund-raising efforts to help raise awareness of heart issues and to raise funds for research. This can be a great way to get involved in helping to improve the lives of everyone affected by high cholesterol levels.

- 4) **Internet newsletters and support groups.** You need to take the advice you get here with a grain of salt, but these groups are invaluable for giving you tips, recipes, and support that can make lowering your cholesterol bearable.
- 5) **In-person support groups.** These often meet at libraries or other public places and can be a good way to get support and find out how others deal with high cholesterol and cholesterol-lowering treatments and medications.
- 6) **Computer programs.** There are computer programs and planners you can buy that can prompt you to take your medication, allow you to create a computer cholesterol log, and keep track of your daily calories, fat grams, sodium intake, and cholesterol.
- 7) **Food guides.** These handy guides are sold at many bookstores and can tell you exactly how much cholesterol, sodium, fat, and other elements are contained in each food. This can make it easier for you to calculate what you are eating.
- 8) **Medical supplies.** There are counters and monitors that can help you keep track of your blood pressure and cholesterol at home. These can be handy in the long run for keeping track of your progress.
- 9) **Cholesterol clinics.** As cholesterol becomes a bigger issue, many pharmacies, hospitals, and clinics offer free workshops, information sessions, and even free cholesterol testing. Often free,

these can be great resources for learning more about cholesterol and for having your cholesterol tested.

10) **Pharmacies.** Many pharmacists have a vast knowledge of cholesterol and heart medications, conditions, and treatments. Many pharmacies have pamphlets, booklets, and even videos that can inform you about cholesterol treatments and options. Your local pharmacy can be a great place to learn more about keeping your heart safe.

11) **Medical Alert bracelets.** These bracelets tell health care professionals of you have heightened cholesterol, other serious conditions, or are on cholesterol medication. If you are injured or unable to speak for yourself in a medical emergency, these bracelets can tell health care professionals which treatments can help you and which can harm you. If you have been told you have elevated cholesterol, you may consider getting these inexpensive bracelets at your local pharmacy.

Cholesterol Glossary

As you lower your cholesterol over the next thirty days, you will likely encounter new words and terms. As you get used to these new concepts, feel free to turn to this glossary to help you recall what is what:

Atherosclerosis

If you have too much cholesterol in the blood, it will create a yellow thick substance on the lining of the blood vessels. This is known as atherosclerosis. If it continues to grow, it can block blood vessels, leading to a stroke or heart attack. This is a key risk of having high bad cholesterol levels.

Blood cholesterol

Blood cholesterol is wax-like material that is made by the body. Blood cholesterol is needed to keep cells healthy, to create hormones, and to keep the body functioning. Too much, though, increases your risk of atherosclerosis.

Dietary cholesterol

Dietary cholesterol is the cholesterol found in some of your food. Since all animals produce cholesterol, dietary cholesterol is found in the foods that are made from animals (foods such as meat, dairy products, fish, and eggs). To stay heart-healthy, you will want to avoid eating too much dietary cholesterol.

Cholesterol Profile

Your cholesterol profile is a listing of your cholesterol levels. This includes your LDL, HDL, your total cholesterol, and triglycerides. Your doctor finds this information through a blood test. Your cholesterol profile helps medical professionals determine how much at risk you are for developing certain complications associated with high bad cholesterol levels.

Essential fatty acids

Your body needs fats to survive, and especially to build cells. The fats your body needs to get from the foods you eat are called essential fatty acids.

Fiber

Fiber is the part of plants that cannot be digested by us. There are two types of fiber: insoluble and soluble. Both are important to health. Insoluble fiber in grains and fruits and vegetables is what keeps you “regular” and keeps your bowels in good shape. The soluble fiber found in oats, barley, and other plants has been found to lower cholesterol levels. If you are trying to lower your cholesterol and stay healthy, eating a diet with adequate fiber can help.

High Density Lipoproteins (HDL)

This is known as the "good" cholesterol, and is generated by the liver. HDL transports cholesterol and fats to your liver from your arteries. In the liver, the fats can be broken down or recycled for your body to use. If you have high levels of HDL, chances are your heart is healthy, since the cholesterol is being effectively transported rather than being left in your blood, where it can cause a hardening of the arteries. If you have too low levels of HDL, you may be putting your heart at risk.

Hydrogenated fats

These are fats you want to avoid in your diet if you want to lower bad cholesterol levels. Hydrogenated fats are fats - either polyunsaturated or monounsaturated - that have been treated with hydrogen atoms to guarantee a longer shelf life. The process of hydrogenation causes fats to become saturated fats.

Lipid Specialists

These doctors specialize in the treatment of treating high blood cholesterol and related health issues. If you have very high cholesterol and traditional methods of lowering your cholesterol and risk for heart disease do not work, you may be referred to a lipid specialist for specialized treatment.

Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL)

Also called "bad cholesterol", LDLs is manufactured by the liver. Its job is to transport fats - including cholesterol - from the liver to the areas of your body that need the fats (such as your organs, muscles, and your tissues). If your LDL levels are high, it suggests that there is plenty of cholesterol in your blood, which increases the chances of clogged arteries, which in turn is very dangerous for your heart.

Monounsaturated fats

These fats are liquids at room temperature. These fats are also good for you because they don't change your HDL (good cholesterol) levels but do lower your LDL (bad cholesterol levels). Look for products that have these fats if you want to stay heart-healthy. Monounsaturated fats are found in olive and canola oil.

Omega_6

This is actually a "family" of fatty acids that increase your good cholesterol level while lowering your bad cholesterol. This makes Omega-6 a great food source for staying healthy. You can find these fatty acids in nuts, grains, vegetables, and vegetable oils. They are part of the reason why you are likely encouraged to eat these foods in your low-cholesterol diet.

Polyunsaturated fats

These fats are liquid at room temperature. They are a better choice than saturated fats, but they tend to lower both good and bad cholesterol levels, so they are not the best choice for good health. In small amounts, these fats may lower bad cholesterol.

Processed Foods

Processed foods are foods that have been treated before being sold. In some cases, processed foods are treated to eliminate bacteria or make foods healthier. For example, the process of pasteurization eliminates some of the harmful elements in milk that can make us sick. Most of our foods are processed in some way. However, some foods are processed in order to change their taste or in order to give them a longer shelf-life. The processing that it takes to do this sometimes involves adding fats, salts and other unhealthy ingredients or involves heating the foods until some or much of the nutrient value is lost. When choosing processed foods, it is important to choose foods that have as few detrimental ingredients as possible. In general, foods that have had more done to them (such as deli meats, potato chips, cookies, and others) and foods that are considered "fast foods" or convenience foods (such as hamburgers, prepared hors d'oeuvres, and cocktail snacks, among others) are higher in fats and salt. Read the labels of all processed foods to understand exactly what you are eating and how these foods may affect your health.

Saturated fats

These fats are solid at room temperature. They are also the most likely to raise your bad cholesterol - in fact, they are a bigger culprit than dietary cholesterol. If you want to lower your cholesterol, avoid these fats in your food. In many cases, saturated fats come from animal proteins and products (meats, and milk products). They are also found in hydrogenated vegetable oil and in coconut and palm oil.

Trans_fatty acids

These are another fat group you will want to avoid. They are hydrogenated and increase bad cholesterol while lowering good cholesterol.

Triglycerides

Triglycerides are a fat - like cholesterol - which is transported in the blood stream. This fat is the culprit behind most of the fat in the body. Like LDL-cholesterol, it can form a thick goo and

block arteries if there is too much of it in the blood. As you lower your bad cholesterol, you will also want to keep your triglycerides low. Often, high triglycerides are caused by too much alcohol use, overeating (or being overweight) and not enough physical exercise.

Very Low Density Lipoproteins (VLDL)

These lipoproteins transport cholesterol from the liver to the body organs and tissues that need it. Studies have shown that high levels of these lipoproteins may be a risk factor for heart disease. Not all cholesterol profiles include a number for VLDLs, but if yours does, work to keep the levels low.

Conclusion

By now, you understand what cholesterol is and what you need to do to keep your cholesterol level healthy and your heart in good condition. There is a lot of information in this ebook, and that is why you will want to take the time to look over parts of it again to refresh your memory and to get more ideas for lowering your cholesterol.

Even though the tips and information in this ebook will help lower your cholesterol in thirty days, this book about a lot more than just a month in your life:

Lower cholesterol is a life-long commitment to better health. You need to keep working on good health to keep your cholesterol levels good and your body healthy.

The ideas in this book aren't just to help you get your cholesterol back to acceptable levels so that you can return to your old eating habits. The ideas in this ebook are meant to help you make permanent changes in your life that can help keep you healthy for life.

Throughout this ebook, you have been encouraged to ask questions and take actions that can help to improve your health. If you are not sure where to start or are feeling overwhelmed at this point, consider our fast (partial) checklist of getting started to lower cholesterol. Start doing these things today:

Review to Get Started to Lower Cholesterol

- See a doctor to have your cholesterol levels checked and to get personalized advice about keeping healthy.
- Eat more fresh fruit fruits and vegetables. Make sure you get plenty of variety of these.
- Eat fish, shellfish, and lean cuts of meat and poultry. Use low-fat dairy products.

- Cut back on salt and fats in your cooking. Add flavor with herbs and spices. You can also add flavor by marinating foods in lemon juice, spices, or pureed fruits or vegetables.
- Broil, bake, grill, steam, or poach your food rather than frying.
- If you smoke, stop.
- Exercise for twenty minutes at least every other day.
- Get your body to a healthy body weight.
- Check food labels - buy foods that are low in fats, and have few saturated and trans-fats.
- Eat in more often. Learn to prepare your own low-fat and heart-healthy meals that you enjoy.
- If you do eat out, choose the plainest and leanest foods you can. Ask for dressings and sauces on the side or ask them to be left out entirely.
- Eat reasonable portions of foods.
- Follow your doctor's directions about cholesterol treatment as precisely as you can.
- Learn all you can about cholesterol and healthy eating so that you can make better choices.
- Make eating healthy more convenient by making low-fat and heart-healthy snacks and meals available in your home.
- Get rid of high-fat and unhealthy foods in your home and replace them with tasty but healthy foods that are good and good for you.
- Keep a cholesterol diary that details your foods, your exercise, your cholesterol treatment, your symptoms, your questions, and your progress. Update it daily to have an accurate reflection of your actions.

These tips are a good place to start as you slowly start implementing the many ideas in this ebook that can help you lower your cholesterol. These tips can start you on your 30 days and your entire lifetime of lowered cholesterol.

Remember that your doctor may well give any treatment for lowering cholesterol up to three months to work before deciding whether a treatment works or not. You deserve to give yourself a similar gift of time by giving yourself the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits that a heart-healthy diet and lifestyle can bring.

Start taking the steps you need to take to get your cholesterol in reasonable limits today!

