



WELLNESS CENTER

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HYPERCHOLESTEROLEMIA (HIGH CHOLESTEROL)

Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in your blood. Your body needs cholesterol to build healthy cells, but high levels of cholesterol can increase your risk of heart disease. With high cholesterol, you can develop fatty deposits in your blood vessels. Eventually, these deposits grow, making it difficult for enough blood to flow through your arteries. Sometimes, those deposits can break suddenly and form a clot that causes a heart attack or stroke. High cholesterol can be inherited, but it is often the result of unhealthy lifestyle choices, which make it preventable and treatable. A healthy diet, regular exercise, and sometimes medication can help reduce high cholesterol.

Diet and Lifestyle Tips

- Limit Your Intake of Saturated Fat
- Cook with vegetable oils, such as olive, canola, sunflower and safflower
- Eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, walnuts and ground flaxseed
- Swap out butter and lard for healthier vegetable oil options
- Avoid trans fats — they have been found to increase LDL or “bad” cholesterol levels and are found in highly processed foods. Try to limit food that includes hydrogenated fat/oil on the ingredients list
- Select Lean proteins
 - Opt for meats that have claims like LOIN or Round on the package
 - Strip the skin off your chicken and turkey to get a healthier option
 - Cook and select food that’s are baked, broiled or grilled instead of fried/deep fried
 - After cooking ground meat, drain off any excess fat
- Engage in regular exercise. Strive for 150-300 minutes per week of moderate-intensity or 75-150 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, and 2+ days per week of muscle-strengthening exercises.

Soluble Fiber Helps Lower Cholesterol

Dietary fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils and whole grains. These nutrient-dense foods provide two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble. Both types are important for good health. Getting adequate amounts of dietary fiber from a variety of foods is important for everyone. It is recommended that adults get between 25-34 g dietary fiber per day.

Research has shown that soluble fiber, in particular, from fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils and whole grains, may help to lower LDL cholesterol. In the stomach, soluble fiber forms a thick, jelly-like substance, which helps bind dietary cholesterol from foods you’re eating and excrete them from the body,

Load up on vegetables and fruits

- Select fruits and vegetables that are good sources of soluble fiber. For example, asparagus, brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, turnips, apricots, mangoes and oranges are great sources.
- Eat a variety of different colored fruits and veggies. Strive to eat all the colors of the rainbow each day!
- Shift to more plant-based or vegetarian meals by including beans, lentils and soy foods.
- Focus on whole forms of produce, which includes fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits.
- Look for canned fruits packed in water or their own juice.
- Choose low-sodium canned veggies or varieties

Complications

If you have any questions or concerns about your cholesterol levels, please call the Wellness Center’s Dial-A-Nurse helpline at (773) 508-8883. To make an appointment with the Wellness Center dietitian you can also book online at <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/nutrition/appointmentservices/>.

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