

Heart Healthy Choices

10 tips for keeping your cholesterol levels in check

By Carmen Prion-Frank (RD), Mike Stone (CEP, RMT), and Trudy Spawton (Kinesiologist)



1

BUILD A BALANCED PLATE

At lunch and dinner, try to fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ with a protein choice, $\frac{1}{4}$ with a starchy choice. Switch to using smaller plates (20 cm diameter) such as salad or dessert plates.

2

CHOOSE HIGH FIBRE FOODS

at each meal and snack. Certain types of fibre can help take some of the building blocks for cholesterol out of the body. Whole grain foods like oatmeal, whole grain breads and pastas, quinoa, barley, as well as vegetables and fruit all contain fibre.

3

AVOID PROCESSED FOODS

Processed foods tend to have a lot of added sugar, salt and fat (especially saturated and trans fats which can raise your blood cholesterol levels). A high salt diet can raise your blood pressure, putting more strain on your heart. Reducing the amount of sugar in your diet can help you control your weight. Enjoy the natural flavours of food, such as a juicy piece of fruit!

5

CHOOSE FISH AT LEAST TWICE PER WEEK

Fish is a healthy protein choice, and some varieties such as salmon, halibut, and trout offer the heart-healthy benefits of omega-3 fats. Try cooking vegetarian meals several times per week using lentils, chickpeas and beans. These foods also contain fibre, and naturally have no cholesterol.

EXPLORE YOUR SPICE RACK

Use herbs and spices to add flavour to your foods instead of sugar, dressings, salt and gravy.

4



For more information on what choices are best for you, make an appointment with your dietitian, kinesiologist, nurse or doctor today. 403-685-4520

6

GET AN ASSESSMENT DONE

A Registered Kinesiologist or Exercise Physiologist can help you to understand your level of fitness and how hard you need to exercise to have heart healthy benefits. Even though all activity is great, there is a level you need to achieve to see benefits for your heart health.

7

SIMPLIFY YOUR ACTIVITY

Take a walk/bike with the family (walk with your kids as they bike if they are younger), walk the golf course, take the stairs, PLAY!!

8

HAVE FUN!

Do things actively that you like to do. This will set you up for success in the long run.

9

TRY NEW KINDS OF ACTIVITIES

Many video games today are interactive. Engage with your children, wife, significant other, roommate, parents, etc. Move!

10

SAFETY FIRST

Always get clearance from your doctor prior to starting any fitness program. You cannot feel high blood pressure or other health issues. Safety is always first with heart health!

Quitting smoking can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease.

Visit www.qosmokefree.ca

What do I need to know about cholesterol levels and exercise?

High LDL cholesterol, also known as “bad cholesterol,” increases your risk for heart disease. When your LDL cholesterol is high, plaque can start to build up in your blood vessels, decreasing how well blood is transported through your body, and putting extra strain on your heart. Eventually, if too much plaque builds up, it could result in a heart attack or stroke.

Exercising regularly can increase your good cholesterol (HDL), which can help to carry bad cholesterol (LDL) away from your artery walls.

85% of adults in Canada are not meeting the recommended amount of physical activity to maintain health.

In order to improve cholesterol levels, it is recommended to include 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity each week. Check with your kinesiologist to understand what these levels mean for you.

Always make sure to check with your doctor about what exercises are suitable for you before starting a new exercise plan.

Need help understanding your lab work?

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol is often called the bad cholesterol because high levels in the blood promotes the buildup of plaque in the arteries

High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is called the good cholesterol because it helps carry LDL-cholesterol away from the artery walls

Triglycerides are not a type of cholesterol. However they are a type of fat that is found in the blood. High Triglycerides are associated with excess weight, excess alcohol consumption and diabetes

Source: Heart & Stroke Foundation

Total cholesterol is calculated by using your HDL, LDL and Triglyceride values and gives an overview of your cholesterol levels

Note: LDL, HDL and Triglycerides are all labs that are done after you have been fasting for 12-15 hours.



*Sourced from Canadian Obesity Network