

# Food To Lower Your Cholesterol

Contributed by Webmaster

By Jan Richards

High cholesterol levels are slowly killing off the population. The increasing prevalence and risk of hypertension and heart disease in Americans are ringing the alarm bells in the country's health sector. Health officials are desperately trying to find ways to combat the rise and make people aware of the eating lifestyle and exercise lifestyle that they are imbibing.

## The truth about cholesterol

Although cholesterol is mainly the culprit in the increase in high blood pressure in the body, not all cholesterol that we take in is essentially bad. In fact, small amounts of cholesterol is being used by the body in the production of bile salts and in the transformation of Vitamin D. Cholesterol also plays a role in the balancing of hormones especially in women.

There are two kinds of cholesterol, the good and the bad as the lay people will like to call them. The bad cholesterol or the LDL is the kind that is often found in saturated fats and trans fatty acids. These are taken into the body through foods that are pre-packed and prepared such as potato chips, canned goods, etc. LDL cholesterol adheres to the walls of the arteries. High levels of LDL can form plaques in the arterial walls that may eventually cause clogging in the passageway of the blood. This slows down the blood flow, which in turn makes it hard for the heart to pump. This scenario describes the initial stages of hypertension and coronary heart problems.

## What to eat

The good cholesterol HDL on the other hand lower the levels of LDL in the body by helping transport the LDL to the liver where it is excreted. HDL cholesterol can be found in fishes as well as in nuts.

Other foods that can lower the cholesterol levels are fruits and vegetables. These foods do not contain that much cholesterol so whatever you have, you will not be adding to its levels.

Another great thing about veggies and fruits is the fact that they are great sources of fibers that the body also need to combat the increase in LDL cholesterol. Berries, fruits that are citrus and carrots are just some of the fruits that you can count on. Another food that can dramatically reduce the levels of cholesterol in the body is the soya. Fiber-rich food, soya as well as almonds and plant sterols figure in a landmark study conducted by University of Toronto that reduced the cholesterol levels of the participants by as much as 20 percent. Eating oats, olive oil and barley are also great ways to lower LDL.

Another great source of cholesterol are foods that are really oily. To lower one's LDL, one must consciously avoid foods that are deep-fried. If you have to eat fried foods, make sure that the oil that you use is made out of vegetable.

Never use butter as this is rich in saturated fats. Instead, use margarine as a substitute. Try to also steam, braise, boil or bake your food. You will find that they are tastier and healthier.

## Not just the food

There are many factors that contribute to the rise of cholesterol levels in the body. In addition to one's eating lifestyle, there is the age, the gender, the family history and of course the amount of physical activity that the person does.

Exercise is fairly important in keeping LDL cholesterol at bay. What is more, it strengthens the body's resistance as well as improves blood circulation.

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For tips on cholesterol ratio and low cholesterol foods, visit the Cholesterol Guidelines website.