

Cholesterol Education Month

From the desk of Volunteer, Michelle Kelly RDN, LD

Has your doctor told you that you need to lower your blood cholesterol? What is blood cholesterol? Where does cholesterol come from? What risks are associated with high blood cholesterol? How do you lower your blood cholesterol?

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of fat that your body can make **and** is found in foods that you eat from animal products. Some cholesterol is needed for your body to work the right way.

Where does cholesterol come from?

Your body is able to make all the cholesterol it needs to function. Animal products are the other main source of cholesterol. Examples of animal products are: egg yolks, red-meat, chicken, milk, cream cheese, & butter.

What risks are associated with high cholesterol?

High cholesterol can be very dangerous to your health and should be taken seriously. If you were told you have high cholesterol you are at a higher risk for having a heart attack or stroke.

How do I lower my blood cholesterol?

- Limit cholesterol intake to less than 300 milligrams a day.
- Limit total fat intake to 30% or less of your total daily calories, and saturated fat to 10% or less of your daily calories.
- Eat more plant foods such as: fruits, veggies, whole grains (breads and cereal).
- Add more fish to your diet.
- Buy lean cuts of meat and trim off any visible fat before cooking. Remove skin from poultry prior to cooking.
- Eat a meatless meal at least once a week.
- Instead of frying, try boiling, broiling, baking, roasting, poaching, steaming, or sautéing.
- Use two egg whites for one whole egg when baking.
- Use low-fat or nonfat milk instead of whole milk.

Other fats to know when watching your cholesterol.

- *Saturated fatty acids* are found mostly in foods from animals (e.g. red meat and whole milk dairy products). Saturated fatty acids are also in oils like palm, palm kernel, and coconut oil, which are often used in commercial baked goods. Limiting foods like these can also lower your cholesterol.
- *Polyunsaturated fatty acids* tend to reduce blood cholesterol levels and can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. They are found most often in sunflower, corn, soybean, and safflower oils.
- *Monounsaturated fatty acids* help lower blood cholesterol when you are eating a diet low in saturated fats. They are found in olive oil, canola oil, and in certain plant food like avocados.

Foods that can help improve your numbers include:

Oatmeal, oat bran, and high-fiber foods	Fish and omega-3 fatty acids
Walnuts, almonds and other nuts	Avocados
Olive Oil	

Resources: American Heart Association @ http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/Cholesterol_UCM_001089_SubHomePage.jsp
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-cholesterol/in-depth/cholesterol/art-20045192>

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Thank you!

Questions? If you have any questions on this or any nutrition-related topic, or have an idea for a future *Healthy Bite* topic, please call our registered dietitian, Lori Harvey. You can reach her by telephone at 330-376-7717 extension 140 or by email lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org.

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