

## Cholesterol

**Cholesterol** is a waxy substance found in the fats (lipids) of your blood, within your circulatory system. While your body needs cholesterol to continue building healthy cells, having high cholesterol can increase your risk of heart disease. When you have high cholesterol, you may develop fatty deposits in your blood vessels. Eventually, these deposits make it difficult for enough blood to flow through your arteries. Your heart may not get as much oxygen-rich blood as it needs, which increases the risk of a heart attack; as well as, decreased blood flow to your brain which can cause a stroke. Cholesterol is carried through your blood, attached to proteins. This combination of proteins and cholesterol is called a lipoprotein. There are two categories based on what type of cholesterol the lipoprotein carries:

- **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL).** LDL (bad) cholesterol transports cholesterol through your body and builds up in the walls of your arteries, making them hard and narrow.
- **High-density lipoprotein (HDL).** HDL (good) cholesterol picks up excess cholesterol and takes it back to your liver.

High cholesterol, also known as hypercholesterolemia, can be treated with proper dietary intake and regular exercise. Focus on foods such as:

**Oatmeal and high-fiber foods-** Oatmeal contains soluble fiber, which reduces your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the "bad" cholesterol. Soluble fiber is also found in such foods as kidney beans, apples, pears, barley and prunes. Soluble fiber can reduce the absorption of cholesterol into your bloodstream. Five to 10 grams or more of soluble fiber a day decreases your total and LDL cholesterol. Eating 1 cup of cooked oatmeal provides 5 grams of fiber. If you add fruit, such as bananas, you will add about 4 more grams of fiber.

**Fish and omega-3 fatty acids-** Eating fish can be heart healthy because of its high levels of omega-3 fatty acids. The highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids are in salmon, halibut, and mackerel. Broiling or baking fish helps avoid adding unhealthy fats. You can also get omega-3 fatty acids from foods such as ground flaxseed and walnuts.

**Nuts-** Almonds and other tree nuts can improve blood cholesterol. Rich in mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids, nuts also help keep blood vessels healthy. Eating about a handful a day of most nuts, such as walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, or pistachios can reduce the risk of heart disease. Make sure the nuts you eat are not salted or coated with sugar. All nuts are high in calories, so a handful will do.

**Avocados-** Avocados are a potent source of nutrients, as well as, monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs). Adding a quarter to a half of an avocado a day to a heart-healthy diet can help improve LDL levels. Try adding avocado slices to salads and sandwiches or make guacamole and have with raw cut vegetables, such as carrots, celery, or cucumber slices.

**Tomatoes and paste** contain lycopene which naturally lowers LDL. Add tomatoes to salads or omelets as a nutrient dense option.

Choosing the right combinations of food for your internal health will offer you the results you want and help you to shine inside and out. [Her Signature](#) optimizes each of your body's systems including circulatory, digestive, endocrine, exocrine, immune, muscular, nervous, renal, reproductive, respiratory, and skeletal for overall health and well-being.

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