

Healthy Eating for a Healthy Heart

Making changes to what you eat can reduce your cholesterol level and the risk of heart disease. To lower your cholesterol, or to keep it low:

1) Keep a Healthy Weight

Being overweight, in particular carrying extra weight around the waist area, can contribute to increased cholesterol levels.

To lose weight you should:

- choose more high-fibre, low saturated and low trans fat foods
- limit alcohol to small amounts or nil
- include moderate intensity exercise for at least ½ hour, 5 times per week



2) Avoid Saturated and Trans Fat

There are 4 main types of fat in food; saturated fat, trans fat, monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat. Saturated and trans fat causes a high cholesterol level and should be avoided (even if you are not overweight).

Saturated and trans fats are found in the following foods:

- Butter, ghee, copha, lard
- Coconut oil, palm oil, blended vegetable oil
- Meat fat, chicken skin, bacon, sausages
- Salami, cabanossi, devon
- Cream, cheese, full cream milk, ice-cream, yoghurt
- Cakes, biscuits, donuts, muesli bars
- Pies, sausage rolls, hot dogs
- Snack foods, fried take-away food eg. KFC, hot chips, chiko rolls.



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3) Small Amounts of Monounsaturated Fat and Polyunsaturated Fat

Both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats help reduce cholesterol. You should consume these fats in place of saturated fat. If you are overweight, only have small amounts of these fats.

High in monounsaturated fat	High in polyunsaturated fat
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avocado• Olive oil• Canola oil• Nuts and seeds• Canola and olive oil margarines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Polyunsaturated margarines• Sunflower oil, safflower oil• Corn oil, soybean oil• Fish and fish oil• Nuts and seeds.

4) Eat More Soluble Fibre

There are two types of fibre; insoluble and soluble fibre. Insoluble fibre, found in wheat bran, fruit and vegetables helps prevent constipation. Soluble fibre, found in fruits, vegetables, rice bran and legumes helps reduce cholesterol levels.

5) Limit Foods Containing Cholesterol

Cholesterol is only found in some animal foods. Foods high in cholesterol are egg yolks, prawns, calamari, octopus, brains, kidney and liver. Dietary cholesterol can raise blood cholesterol levels, however saturated fat has a much greater effect. Some food products have no cholesterol but are still high in saturated fat.



6) Limit Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol does not raise blood cholesterol, but it can raise triglycerides, blood pressure and body weight. If you do consume alcohol, limit yourself to one standard drink for women and two standard drinks for men. Ensure that you have at least two alcohol free days a week.

1 Standard Drink is equal to: 100 ml Wine, 425 ml Lite Beer, 375 ml Full Strength Beer, 30 ml Spirit or 60 ml Fortified Wine.

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7) Limit Salt Consumption

The Australian Heart Foundation recommends ALL Australians reduce the amount of salt they eat. Reducing dietary salt can lower your blood pressure and reduce the risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease. Try to limit your salt intake to 1-2g/day (1/2–1 tsp) or 1000-2000mg sodium per day.

Tips to reduce your salt intake:

- Choose 'No Added Salt' or 'Low Salt' processed foods
- Avoid using salt when cooking
- Limit highly processed foods such as bacon, sausages, processed meats, tomato sauce and frozen meals
- Avoid using salt at the dinner table
- Choose fresh foods rather than canned ones
- Use spices and herbs when cooking rather than salt
- Check the nutrition panel and choose foods with less than 600 mg sodium per 100g

8) Eat More Fruit, Vegetables, Wholegrain Breads and Cereals, Pasta, Rice and Beans

An easy tool to help follow the recommendations discussed on the previous pages is the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. It shows you which foods to eat most, and which foods to eat moderately, which foods to eat in small amounts.



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The foods to **EAT MOST** are high in carbohydrate. They are low in fat, high in fibre (both insoluble and soluble) and should be the basis of healthy eating. This group includes wholegrain cereals, wholemeal breads/rice/pasta, fruit, vegetables and legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils). Legumes are a good source of both carbohydrate and protein.

The foods to **EAT MODERATELY** are protein-containing foods. The protein foods are meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dairy/soy products and nuts. Meat, poultry and dairy foods can be high in saturated fat, so choose the low fat or no fat options.

The foods to **EAT IN SMALL AMOUNTS** are high in fat, added sugars and salt. It is important to avoid saturated fats and replace these with mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. If you are overweight replace saturated fats with carbohydrate foods or reduce overall fat and energy intake a little bit at a time.

HYDRATION is very important for healthy living and a healthy body, aim to drink at least 2L of fluid, preferably water, each day for good health.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Our outpatient Dietitian is located within the hospital and can also help you with maintaining a healthy weight (increasing or decreasing) and provide a full dietary analysis to measure dietary adequacy. Please call to make an appointment (02) 9487 9581.

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