

Great Low Cholesterol Foods

Your test results are in, and the news is not good: your cholesterol level is over the top, and it's time to give your diet and lifestyle some serious thought.

If you need to bring your cholesterol level down, there are several options available to you. First and foremost, you need to change your lifestyle. This can be the most difficult step, but it's crucial to lowering your high cholesterol. Bad habits like smoking and drinking can be hard to break, but you can do it.

Once you've cleared the initial lifestyle hurdle, the next step is choosing low cholesterol foods. Fresh produce is a great no-cholesterol choice. Fiber acts as a cholesterol sponge, soaking it up and disposing it from the body, and fruits and vegetables have a very high fiber content. Increasing your fiber intake and carbohydrates not only lowers your cholesterol level, it also decreases your risk of heart attack and can help prevent the development of colon-related problems including cancer of the colon. Apples, oranges and pears are particularly high in fiber and low in cholesterol. Oats and carrots are also great choices, as are complex carbohydrates like pasta, whole grains and potatoes.

The Internet is an excellent source of information when you're looking for low cholesterol foods. Search online for diets that can help you to lower the fat and cholesterol levels in your body, and help prevent heart disease. Decreasing your total intake of saturated fat, calories, and cholesterol are key to lowering your weight and attaining a lower level of blood cholesterol. Remember, low cholesterol foods and daily exercise are major factors in lowering the cholesterol level.

The way that you prepare your foods is also an important element in your healthy diet. Consider cooking foods with monounsaturated fats, such as peanut, canola and olive oil. Avoid using margarine, lard, shortening and other hydrogenated and vegetable oils. Bake, broil, roast or grill your meats instead of frying them. Stop eating processed foods and minimize your intake of saturated fats. Whole milk, dairy products, egg yolks and organ meats should be avoided. Instead, opt for low-fat dairy products and take steps to reduce your intake of sugar, salt and alcohol. Fish is a great source of omega-3 fatty acids, and can lower the blood lipid levels.

This might seem like a major dietary change, but it's not really all that difficult to attain. The biggest step is avoiding fast food restaurants. The majority of their menu items are loaded in fat and sodium.

It's easy to plan a delicious and satisfying menu using low cholesterol foods. Use the following ideas as starting points:

Breakfast: Choose a variety of fruits and cereals, whole grain toast, egg substitutes (without the yolk) and skim milk.

Lunch: Sliced veggies and salads, vegetable soup, fresh fruit and whole grains are best. Use a mixture of olive oil and vinegar to dress your salad.

Dinner: Brown rice, broccoli, grilled lean meats and wholegrain breads make a delicious and filling meal.

Smart Snacks: Low fat yogurt, pretzels, nuts and lots of fresh vegetables and fruits.

Eating smart shouldn't be a chore. Speak with your doctor or consult a qualified nutritionist or dietician if you need help choosing low cholesterol foods. Making the decision to live healthier is easy; making the commitment to stick with it is the hard part. Stay strong and you'll be strong.