Cholesterol & Your Diet

The good, the bad, and the ugly …

Fats are an essential part of any diet. The area where people sometimes stumble is when it comes to choosing the right type of fats. We measure the amount of fat or cholesterol via blood tests, and it gives us a break down of these fats.

The good guys:

Good cholesterol, also known as High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) helps your body to carry fats from the tissues, to the liver, where it can be removed from the body. Ideally, we want to increase levels of HDL to prevent diseases such as atherosclerosis (which blocks the arteries), thus preventing high blood pressure, symptoms of angina, heart attack, and stroke. HDL levels can be increased by eating fish, non-refined carbohydrates, legumes, nuts and plenty of fresh fruit and vegies. See the list below for a full range.

The bad guys:

Bad cholesterol, also known as Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) carries fats around your body and deposits them onto the walls of your arteries. Over time these deposits build up and can sometimes cause a significant blockage. This process of blockage, atherosclerosis, leads to heart attack, stroke, and high blood pressure. LDL levels are increased by eating animal fats. Avoid eating these by reducing your intake of fatty meats, full-cream diary, and fast foods. A comprehensive list is below.

HIGH HDL + Low LDL = LOWER RISK OF HEART DISEASE

The other guys:

Triglyceride, another type of fat that contributes to blocking the arteries, can be reduced by simply reducing total daily intake of kilojoules (also known as calories). This particularly applies to reducing intake of sugar and other carbohydrates, and high-kilojoule drinks (e.g. soft-drinks & alcohol).

Other ways to improve your cholesterol:

Regular exercise - a minimum of 30 min for 5 days/week of moderate activity, in addition to household chores and gardening will help improve your HDL levels and will also reduce your triglyceride level.

Foods to Improve Your Score!

Fish of all types including tinned varieties - try for 2-3 x 150g serves/week

Plant-based oils (olive, canola, soybean, sunflower, sesame, or peanut oil) - use this in your cooking instead of butter

Margarines e.g. replace butter with Flora Pro-Active or Logicol

Non-refined carbohydrates e.g. wholegrain bread, breakfast cereals, crispbreads & rice-cakes, rolled oats, brown rice, wholemeal pasta

Legumes e.g. Split peas, kidney beans, baked beans, lentils, soy beans, chickpeas

Nuts e.g. walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, tahini (sesame seeds)

Vegetables & fruit - remember to maintain variety

Enriched foods - look for foods containing added stanol, phytosterol, and omega-3 in bread, margarine & dairy products

Fish oil capsules/liquid - to supplement dietary fish intake.

YOUR SCORE:
Total Cholesterol = _____
HDL= _____ LDL = _____
Triglyceride= _____
Date Tested: ___/___/___
GOAL POSTS:
Total Cholesterol = _____
HDL= _____ LDL = _____
Triglycerides = _____

Foods to Avoid!

Fatty meats - remember to cut off the fat before cooking!

Processed meat - think salami, sausages, etc. - try making your own mince!

Organ meats (offal) - e.g. brains, liver pate liverwurst, kidney, sweetbread

Full fat dairy products e.g. cheeses, yoghurt, ice-cream, soy products, and condensed milk

Store bought/fast food e.g. cakes, biscuits, crackers, pies pastries, doughnuts, hamburgers, hot-dogs, fried chicken

Palm oil

A note on eggs:
You can consume a maximum **of 6 eggs/week** as long as the rest of your diet is "cardio-protective", that is, you follow the above recommendations.

When eating out:
Try sushi, Asian stir-fries, tomato-based pasta dishes, grilled fish, or choose chicken or lean meat with salad.

Want to know more?
Visit: www.heartfoundation.org.au for more information on cholesterol and health eating tips!