

RyChol™

Cholesterol Lowering Guidelines



What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance, naturally found in all humans and animals. It has many important functions that are essential to the body and forms part of the basic structure of some hormones, all cell membranes and the insulation layer around nerves. Too much cholesterol, however, causes hardening of the arteries, a medical condition that leads to heart attacks and strokes. The good news is that by proactively managing your cholesterol levels, you can dramatically reduce your risk of heart disease and live a longer, healthier and more productive life.

What is the difference between good and bad cholesterol?

Although some cholesterol is found on its own in the bloodstream, most cholesterol molecules are bonded to specialised proteins called lipoproteins that transport cholesterol through the body. Cholesterol bonded to low-density lipoprotein or LDL, tends to accumulate inside arteries, and is therefore detrimental to the body. It is therefore commonly referred to as 'bad cholesterol'. Cholesterol bonded to high-density lipoprotein or HDL, on the other hand, gets transported to the liver where it is naturally expelled from the system as a component of bile. It is therefore beneficial to have high levels of HDL, hence the term 'good cholesterol'.

How does cholesterol cause disease?

The hardening of arteries is a complex process whereby a layer or crust accumulates within the artery. As this layer increases in thickness, the inner passage of the artery, called the lumen, becomes progressively obstructed, leading to the diminished flow of blood through the artery. A clot may easily form inside this narrowed and diseased blood vessel, sealing it off entirely and blocking the flow of blood. This occurrence causes heart attacks and strokes.

Why do cholesterol levels increase?

Besides consuming a diet containing too much saturated fat, many individuals inherit certain biochemical abnormalities that make them abnormally prone to elevated cholesterol levels.

What is saturated fat?

All fats are formed out of smaller components called fatty acids. These are molecules made up from carbon and hydrogen atoms. A saturated fat contains all the hydrogen atoms it can potentially accommodate and is therefore 'saturated' with hydrogen, whilst an 'unsaturated' fat has unoccupied space left. Saturated fat is worse for the body than unsaturated fat. The mixture of fats consumed by most people usually contains three times more saturated than unsaturated fat. Saturated fat increases blood cholesterol levels to a greater degree than the actual cholesterol content of food. Because cholesterol is produced through a biochemical process that takes place inside the liver, only food from an animal origin (creatures with livers) contains cholesterol. Saturated fat, however, is produced via a different biochemical process. Many plant-derived products therefore contain high levels of it.

Which foods are high in saturated fat?

Foods from animal origins are often high in saturated fat as well as cholesterol. This includes red meat, liver and full-cream dairy products like milk, yoghurt, cream, creamed-cheese, cheese, butter and lard. Lean poultry, lean pork and lean bacon also contain



saturated fat, but to a lesser degree than red meat. There are many other miscellaneous sources of food that do not necessarily come from animal origins but also contain large quantities of saturated fat. Examples of these include hardened vegetable oil, including many margarines, biscuits, cakes, tarts, pie crusts, pastries, rusks, chocolate, coffee creamers, ice cream, chips/crisps and non-dairy cream substitutes. Coconut oil and palm kernel oil are also high in fat.

How could I alter my diet to help reduce my cholesterol levels?

Eat minimal amounts of fatty red meat, processed meat, organ meat, sausages, shellfish, beef biltong, boerewors, droë wors, full-cream milk, full-cream yoghurt, cream and cream substitutes, coffee creamers, dairy blends, creamed cheese, cheese and ice cream. This includes vegetables prepared in butter and cream (usually in restaurants) and commercially-baked products such as pies, cakes, tarts, croissants, doughnuts, high fat refined biscuits or crackers and buttered popcorn. In addition, avoid muesli containing coconut shavings, butter, hard margarine, coconut milk, French fries, chocolate and soups containing cream (read the nutrition labels).

Try and eat fish and soya more often as a protein source, as well as reduced fat and dairy products like skim milk or fat-free milk, fat-free yoghurt, fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese, fat-free cream cheese and egg whites. Eat moderate amounts of lean red meat, skinless chicken, lean bacon and game, as well as low-fat milk, low-fat yoghurt, low-fat buttermilk, low-fat cheese (less than 15g per 100g), low-fat processed cheese, creamed cottage cheese and sorbet.



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EXCLUDE

EXCLUDE THE FOLLOWING FOODS FROM YOUR DIET

Meats	Fatty red meat, processed meat, organ meat, chicken (with skin), sausages, shellfish, beef biltong, boerewors and droë wors
Pastries	Pies, tarts, croissants, cakes
Fast food	Hamburgers, French fries, crisps, doughnuts, samosas, pizza, high fat refined biscuits or crackers and buttered popcorn.
Dairy	Full-cream milk, full-cream yoghurt, cream and cream substitutes, coffee creamers, dairy blends, creamed cheese, cheese and ice cream, butter, hard margarine, coconut milk, muesli containing coconut shavings, chocolate and soups containing cream.
(Read the nutrition labels). This includes vegetables prepared in butter and cream (usually in restaurants)	

MODERATE

MODERATE THE INTAKE OF THE FOLLOWING FOODS

Meats	Lean red meat, lean pork and game
Poultry	Skinless chicken
Dairy	Low-fat milk, low-fat yoghurt, low-fat buttermilk, low-fat cheese (less than 15g per 100g), low-fat processed cheese and cream.

INCREASE

INCREASE YOUR INTAKE OF THE FOLLOWING FOODS

Fish	All types
Dressing	Olive oil
Fruit & Vegetables	All Types
Grains	Legumes, grains and fresh nuts

