

Towards a better quality of life  
**HESC**  
Home Economics Seminar Centre



Get *heart*  
smart !

# Be Good to Your Heart!



## A. Follow a healthy balanced diet

A diet high in fat, especially saturated fat, increases the level of cholesterol in the walls of the arteries. Over the years, the cholesterol builds up, narrows the arteries and blocks the blood supply. This can result in angina, heart attack or stroke.

There are two types of cholesterol:

### Low density lipoprotein [LDL] (bad cholesterol)

This carries cholesterol from the liver to the body's cells. The cells take the cholesterol they need and excess cholesterol remains in the blood. If there is too much LDL cholesterol, it builds up in the cells and arteries. AIM TO KEEP LEVELS OF LDL LOW.

### High density lipoprotein [HDL] (good cholesterol)

This returns extra cholesterol to the liver where it is eliminated. AIM TO KEEP LEVELS OF HDL HIGH.

## Get to know your fats

### Saturated

Found mainly in animal foods  
e.g. butter, fresh cream, fat in meat, eggs, cheese.

Increase Total Cholesterol & LDL-Cholesterol in the blood.

Lead to heart disease.

### Unsaturated Mono Poly

Olives  
Salmon  
Seafood  
Cashew  
Almonds  
Avocado  
Canola oil  
Peanut oil  
Olive oil

Lower Total Cholesterol & LDL-Cholesterol.  
Increase HDL-Cholesterol levels in the blood.

Can reduce the risk of heart disease.

Sesame oil  
Flax oil  
Sunflower oil  
Corn oil  
Seeds  
Walnuts  
Canola oil

Lower Total Cholesterol & LDL-Cholesterol.  
Possibly also lower HDL-Cholesterol levels in the blood.

### Trans and hydrogenated

Found in processed and deep fried foods  
e.g. margarines, biscuits, cakes, cereal bars, nuggets and processed meats.

Increase Total Cholesterol & LDL-Cholesterol in the blood.

Lowers HDL-Cholesterol.

Lead to heart disease.

## B. Exercise regularly

Regular physical exercise is important for heart health. Excess body weight and a sedentary lifestyle can lead to heart disease. As a healthy adult (aged 18-64 years) you should aim to do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week (eg. walking, gardening) or 75 minutes of vigorous to intense aerobic physical activity throughout the week (eg. jogging, swimming) or an equivalent of moderate and vigorous intensity activity. (WHO, 2004)



## D. Manage stress

Learn simple techniques to control stress and take time to relax. If you feel constantly stressed, it is important that you take steps to reduce your stress levels and your chance of developing heart disease.

## E. Stop Smoking

Smoking leads to reduced blood flow in the arteries. This reduced flow can lead to a heart attack.

## F. Watch your alcohol intake

Men should consume not more than 2 units daily. Women should consume not more than 1 unit daily.

Source: WCRF UK 2007 Expert Report.

## C. Manage your weight

Maintaining a healthy weight is an integral component of heart health. To lose weight, you may need a change in lifestyle. Adopt a healthy lower calorie eating plan and be more active.

Adults can check their Body Mass Index [BMI] using the following simple formula:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}}$$

*What does the result mean?*

< 18.50	Underweight
18.50 - 24.99	Healthy weight
≥ 25.00	Overweight
≥ 30.00	Obese



Source: Adapted from WHO, 2008.

# Foods that help to lower cholesterol naturally



- Oats and oat bran
- Pulses (dried peas, beans and lentils)
- Nuts
- Fresh fruit

- Oily fish
- Fresh vegetables
- Olive oil
- Products fortified with plant sterols and stanols

## Practical dietary tips for a healthy heart

- Eat a variety of starchy foods like rice and other cereals, pasta, and potatoes. Preferably choose wholegrain varieties.
- Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits. Aim for at least 400g of vegetables and fruits of different colours every day.
- Choose white meat such as chicken without skin, rabbit and lean cuts of red meat.
- Grill, steam or bake food and avoid frying.
- Limit your intake of processed food such as sausages, pies, cakes, and biscuits and avoid salad dressings high in fat.



- Choose a low-fat spread high in polyunsaturated fat and without hydrogenated or trans fats. Spread it thinly on one slice of the sandwich only.
- Choose semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, low sugar, low fat yoghurt and low fat cheese.
- Try to eat two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily such as herring, mackerel, salmon and sardines.
- Increase your intake of pulses. Add them to stews, vegetable stir fries, rice and pasta dishes and salads.
- Cut down on salt. Use herbs and spices to improve taste of food.
- Choose healthy snacks e.g. fresh fruit, unsalted nuts, wholemeal sandwiches with healthy fillings, low sugar, low fat yoghurt etc.

