

Cholesterol diet

The amount of fat in the diet has a very important role in many diseases. A proper diet can take care of the majority of patients with high cholesterol, and save the expense of medications. Even modest changes in intake have the potential to make a big difference in a patient's health outlook. Even patients on medications for cholesterol need to follow a diet.

Low Fat Doesn't Mean Zero Fat

We need certain fats (essential fatty acids), so a low-fat diet doesn't mean a zero fat or a healthy, less fattening diet. It may be high in sugar which is not good for your health and may add up some extra calories to your diet. So whenever possible, choose low fat brands that are also low in sugar.

Watch Your Fat Intake

Saturated fats are found in high quantities in foods of animal origin. These are converted to cholesterol by the liver and should not be taken in excess.

- "Polyunsaturated" fats are generally from non-meat sources, and are considered as a better source for the health. However, while they do lower the bad cholesterol, they also have a tendency to lower the good cholesterol along with it,
- "Monounsaturated" fats not only lower the bad cholesterol, but tend to increase the good cholesterol levels.

Saturated fats are often high in foods that are high in cholesterol. Foods that are low in cholesterol can be very high in saturated fats, and therefore the label of "No Cholesterol" does not mean that the product is a good one we should also check the saturated fat content.

Recommendations for a Low-Cholesterol Diet

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, as well as Health and Human Services has recommended the following two diets depending on an individual's risk classification.

A- For Healthy people with normal blood cholesterol levels (**Step 1 diet**):

- Total fat: less than 30% of total calories
 - Saturated fats: less than 10% of total calories
 - Monounsaturated: less than 15% of total calories
 - Polyunsaturated: less than 10% of total calories
- Cholesterol: less than 300 mg daily

B-For patients with high levels of cholesterol the following diet (**Step II**) is recommended:

- Total fat: 25-30% of total calories
 - Saturated fats: less than 7% of total calories
 - Monounsaturated: less than 10% of total calories
 - Polyunsaturated: less than 10% of total calories
- Cholesterol: less than 200 mg daily

What Foods Are High in Fat?

- Dairy foods (whole milk, ice cream, creams)
- Sour cream, whipping cream
- Fatty red meats (go for white meat choices)
- Butter is not only high in fat, but saturated fat as well
- Chicken with skin
- Breaded/Fried Fish
- Oil-packed tuna
- Custards and puddings made with whole milk
- Gravies/sauces (home made with fat and/or milk)
- Butter
- Mayonnaise, regular salad dressings high in fat
- Egg yolks, which are particularly high in cholesterol.
- Cheeses and cream cheeses (always choose white cheese instead of yellow ones)
- Processed meats (sausage, salami, hot dogs, bacon..)
- Baked goods such as:

Croissants, brioches, etc.

Donuts, sweet rolls, muffins, scones, or pastries

Party crackers

Cake (pound, chocolate, yellow)

Cookies

- Avocados

What Are Some Foods that are Low in Fat?

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Fish and shellfish (unbreaded)
- Chicken breast or turkey without skin
- Extra lean ground beef
- Skim milk
- Low-fat dairy products
- Egg whites
- Cereals, rice
- Boiled Pasta
- Whole grains
- Branflakes
- Nuts and seeds
- Popcorn (air popped or light microwave)
- Vegetable oils are preferable to butter