

Natural Ways to Lower Your Cholesterol Level

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High LDL cholesterol is a modifiable risk factor, meaning if you take steps to lower your LDL level, you will reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke. One of the most common questions people ask is whether they can lower their cholesterol level without taking medications? Answer is yes, to some extent. The following are some of the ways to reduce your cholesterol level .

DIETARY CHANGES: It is only about 20% of the cholesterol in your blood stream comes from your diet -your liver and intestines make the rest. Most of the cholesterol in an average person's diet comes from animal-based foods such as meat and dairy which are also high in saturated fat. Saturated fats, clearly raises LDL cholesterol and should be consumed in limited amount.

Changing saturated fat for unsaturated fat, such as those in vegetable oils, avocados, and fatty fish will have significant benefits. Choose low fat or plant based dairy products instead of whole milk, cream, cheese, and butter.

INCREASE YOUR FIBER INTAKE : FIBER binds with cholesterol in the gut and helps to eliminate it from your body. All plant-based food contain fiber, so increasing the proportion of vegetables and whole grains will increase your fiber consumption and lower your cholesterol level.

CHOOSE COMPLEX CARBS: Carbs have earned a bad reputation, but it's mostly a misunderstanding. Low carb diet is not healthy diet. It is simple carbohydrate that you want to avoid. You should eat whole grains and products made with whole grains every day instead of foods made with white flour and other refined grains, whose fiber and valuable nutrients are removed in the process of refining.

REDUCE EXCESS WEIGHT: Losing as little as 5 to 10% of your excess weight can cause your LDL cholesterol to drop. To lose weight naturally, cut back on the number of calories you consume, avoid alcohol and foods with empty calories such as sweets and fats. Also burn more calories than you consume through exercise.

INCREASE YOUR EXERCISE : Exercise helps to increase the HDL level and reduce the LDL level. In addition it may also help to reduce your weight. Recommendation is at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week.

SUPPLEMENTS: Many dietary supplements sold in the market claim to benefit heart health. But only three may help to reduce LDL cholesterol and only by a moderate amount -**PSYLLIUM HUSK:** this is derived from the seeds of the plantago avata plant. This is best known for treatment for constipation and Metamucil is a common brand.

It is thought to absorb bile acid and cholesterol which are then eliminated from the body. The suggested dose is 5 to 10 g. It can lower LDL by above six points on an average. -**PLANT STEROLS:** Found naturally in the cell membrane of plants like nuts, soy beans, peas and rap seed (the source of canola oil). These compounds also called phytosterols, have a structure similar to cholesterol.

Eating them helps to limit the amount of cholesterol your body can absorb. Recent studies suggest that plant sterols will reduced your LDL cholesterol by only 4.4%. -**RED YEAS RICE:** This is made by steaming white rice with the yeast *Monascus Purpueus*. This red colored extract contains Monocolin K, the same active ingredient in the prescription cholesterol lowering drug Lovastatin.

Some suggests that supplements containing 4 mg to 10 mg of Monocolin K may reduce LDL cholesterol by about 6 to 7%. The problem with the plant sterols and red east rice is the same as with all the dietary supplements. The amount of active ingredients is not regulated and may vary from batch to batch.

If you want to try these products, do so only under doctor's supervision and use brands, tested and vetted by ConsumerLab.com which is an independent testing company
STATINS: Unlike dietary supplements, statin drugs contain a known amount of the active ingredients- which decreases the amount of cholesterol the body makes and boost the liver's ability to clear cholesterol from the blood.

In addition, statins have anti inflammatory effects, they help to stabilize the unstable plaques and prevent plaque rupture which diet alone will not do. These and other prescription drugs can lower LDL cholesterol 25 to 55% .Simply having elevated LDL cholesterol doesn't necessarily mean you should be taking statin. The ultimate goal is to lower your risk of heart disease.

Recommendation is to use the American College of cardiology's risk calculator. The calculator provides treatment advice about managing your LDL and other heart risk factors. Then you can discuss with your physician. When people are reluctant to start taking a statin, a coronary calcium score can help them to make a more informed decision.

Any calcium score above zero means that the person has coronary artery disease. Anyone with that diagnosis should get their LDL cholesterol down to 70 or lower which will prevent additional plaque buildup. You can rest assured that your heart will appreciate your efforts.

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