

Cholesterol-Reduced Diet Tips

High cholesterol and heart problems go hand in hand. But they don't need to have the upper hand on your good health.

It is possible to control high cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease through a cholesterol-reduced diet. Whether you already suffer from an elevated cholesterol level, or are at risk of developing one, it's always a great time to get on the road to better health. A cholesterol-reduced diet is lower in fat and high in healthy benefits.

To obtain a cholesterol-reduced diet, you should aim at minimizing your intake of daily total saturated fat calories by 7%, and fat by 25% to 35%. Reduce your sodium intake to 2400 milligrams daily. However, you need to be sure that you're taking in enough calories to maintain a healthy weight and blood cholesterol levels. Finding the right balance can be tricky, but your physician or dietician can help.

If a cholesterol-reduced diet isn't enough, talk to your doctor about the benefits of taking soluble fiber. This and other foods and supplements can help in lowering cholesterol.

Sticking to a specialized diet does not necessarily mean giving up the foods you love. You can even work your cholesterol-reduced diet into restaurant visits. Try these tips on your next night out at your favorite restaurant:

Try these tips

- * Seek out restaurants that offer menu choices that are low in cholesterol and saturated fats
- * Don't feel compelled to overeat. Share your meal with your dinner companion, take half home in a take-out container, or order lunch size or appetizer portions
- * Ask your server to bring butter, gravy, rich sauces and dressings on the side. This way, you'll have more control over the amount of cholesterol and saturated fat in your food
- * Substitute fatty side dishes, such as French fries, with salad or other healthier options
- * You don't have to give up pizza night; just choose a pie with vegetable toppings instead of meat and extra cheese. Or, order half of the pizza with no cheese at all
- * Many fast-food restaurants are taking part in the healthy-choice trend. Take advantage of the smart options available to you. Pass up the fatty burger and fries in favor of a grilled skinless chicken sandwich and side salad.
- * Ask how the restaurant foods are prepared. When given the choice, opt for a cholesterol-reduced preparation method such as steamed, broiled, baked, roasted, poached and dry-boiled foods. Look for heart-smart menu terms such as au jus, garden fresh and lightly saturated
- * Don't be tempted by dishes that are high in cholesterol and saturated fat. Avoid butter sauces, fried foods and dishes that are served au gratin, creamed and escalloped. You should also stay away from casseroles, stewed dishes, anything with a pastry crust and foods with hollandaise or bearnaise sauces.

Diets that reduce saturated fats lead to lower cholesterol, a reduction in body fat and a healthier heart. If any of these areas concern you, don't hesitate to speak to your dietician or physician about your cholesterol-reduced diet.