

4 Tips to Lower Your Cholesterol Levels

Did you know that following a healthy diet and a healthy lifestyle can help you to lower your cholesterol levels? Low cholesterol levels support a healthy heart and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Here we explore 4 tips to help you make healthy changes.

Swap Saturated Fat for Unsaturated Fat

A high consumption of saturated fat (e.g. butter, bacon, coconut oil, fatty meats) is linked to an increased risk of high LDL cholesterol levels (commonly referred to as "bad cholesterol"). Swapping saturated fats for unsaturated fats can reduce this risk. Some examples of unsaturated fats are vegetable oils (e.g. rapeseed oil, olive oil), vegetable spreads, avocado, nuts and seeds. Here are some practical swaps to get you started:

- Swap crisps for unsalted nuts;
- Use yogurt instead of double cream in your curry;
- Alternate meat with other protein sources (e.g. fish, legumes, eggs).



Cut Down on Alcohol

The liver processes excess cholesterol. Drinking too much alcohol puts a strain on the liver, making this work less efficient. If you do drink alcohol it can be helpful to:

- Not exceed the recommended weekly limit (14 units)
- Spread your alcohol consumption in at least 3 days/week
- Have a few alcohol-free days every week



Follow a Healthy Lifestyle

Following a healthy lifestyle, alongside a healthy diet, can help to keep your cholesterol levels in a healthy range. Here are some things to try:

- Regular exercise: find activities that you enjoy doing (e.g. brisk walking, running, yoga) and practise them 1-3 times a week
- Stop smoking: if you are struggling to stop, you can find support services on the NHS website
- Keep active every day: take the stairs, walk/cycle to your appointments when possible, take a break from your desk to make a cup of tea...every movement counts



Eat More Fibre



Fibre helps to reduce the absorption of cholesterol in the blood. On average, people in the UK eat 18g of fibre a day (about half of the national recommendation 30g/d). You can find fibre in fruit, vegetables, legumes (e.g. beans, chickpeas, lentils), wholegrains, nuts and seeds. To up your fibre consumption, try these tips:



- Include a small handful of nuts or one tablespoon of seeds in your breakfast bowl
- Swap white bread or pasta for the wholemeal versions
- When possible, eat vegetables and fruit with the skin on (give them a good wash first)

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References:

Saturated fats and health: SACN report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/the-risks-of-drinking-too-much/>

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