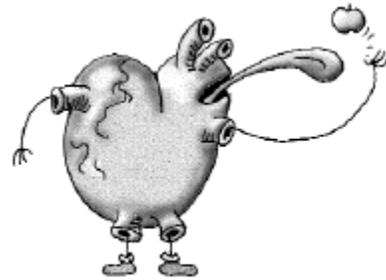


Healthy Eating for a Healthy Heart

You may have recently found out that you have high blood lipid levels. The most commonly known of these is cholesterol. High levels of cholesterol can cause blood vessels to gradually get blocked and become narrower. So if you have a raised cholesterol level, you may be more at risk of developing heart disease. A healthy diet, low in saturated animal fats can help to lower your blood cholesterol level.

If you have been diagnosed with heart disease, but your blood lipid levels are normal, it is still a good idea to follow the dietary advice below.



- **Eat regularly**
- **Body weight** If you are overweight, lose weight.
- **Reduce the total amount of fat you eat and change the type of fat you choose:**
 - **Polyunsaturated Fats**– In moderation these can help lower blood cholesterol. Polyunsaturated fats are found in vegetable oils like sunflower or soya oil and products made from them, like margarine. Oily fish are also good sources.
 - **Monounsaturated Fats** – are found in high proportions in olive and rapeseed oil and margarines made from these. These fats do not increase cholesterol and may lower some types of cholesterol in the blood.
 - **Saturated and Trans Fatty Acids** – will increase blood cholesterol which in turn increases the risk of heart disease. Foods high in these fats include animal products like fatty meat and meat products, full fat dairy products, hard margarines and products containing them such as cakes, biscuits and pastries.

So if you eat meat have the leanest cut and avoid fatty meat products. Choose lower fat dairy products like skimmed or semiskimmed milk, low fat yoghurt or reduced fat cheese. Instead of fried food eat grilled, poached, steamed or microwaved food.

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- **Include oily fish twice weekly** e.g. mackerel, sardines, pilchards, salmon, trout. These help to prevent clogging of the blood vessels.

- **Include starchy food at each meal** These include bread, potatoes, rice, pasta and breakfast cereals. High fibre varieties are particularly good.



- **Include more pulses and oats** e.g. baked beans, kidney beans, lentils, porridge. These foods contain soluble fibre which helps to lower cholesterol levels.



- **Aim to have at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day** Fresh, frozen or tinned are all suitable. The antioxidant vitamins and minerals they contain protect the blood vessels from the

damage of cholesterol.

- **Take alcohol in moderation** Keep within sensible limits, which are 21 units a week for men, 14 units a week for women. The maximum that men should drink is 4 units and women 3 units per day. Everyone should have 1–2 days abstinence each week.

