



Lifestyle Tips to Lower Your LDL Cholesterol

Advice from the National Lipid Association Clinician's Lifestyle Modification Toolbox

What is LDL cholesterol (LDL-C)?

LDL-C is a type of cholesterol in your blood. Too much LDL-C raises your risk for a heart attack or stroke.

What can I do to lower my LDL-C?

What you eat can lower your LDL-C. Foods that can help lower LDL-C are high in soluble fiber. Cooked beans, nuts, and fruits and vegetables are high in soluble fiber. Foods high in healthy fats and low in unhealthy fats can help lower your LDL-C. Choosing foods low in cholesterol can also help lower your LDL-C. Being active every day and having a healthy weight are other ways to lower your LDL-C.

Tips to Lower Your LDL Cholesterol

Choose foods healthy fats in place of saturated fat

- Use canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, and soybean oils
- Use avocados, unsalted nuts, and seeds
- Avoid butter, coconut oil, and palm or palm kernel oil

Choose lean protein foods in place of fatty meats

- Fish like salmon, tuna, trout
- Chicken or turkey with no skin
- Lean red meat like "round" and "loin" cuts
- Plant protein foods like soy (tofu) and dried beans and lentils
- Avoid regular ground beef, fatty cuts of meat, sausage, bacon, hot dogs

Limit foods high in cholesterol

- Limit **egg yolks** to 2-3 per week (one at a time) if you have high LDL-C, diabetes, or heart failure
- Choose egg white and egg substitutes – they don't have cholesterol
- Avoid organ meats like liver and gizzards

Eat more foods high in soluble fiber

- Black beans, kidney beans, split peas, and lentils
- Barley, oats, oat bran, and ground flax seeds
- Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes
- Apples, avocados, oranges, pears

Avoid food and drinks with sugar

- Soda, sweetened tea, fruit drinks, and sport drinks
- Cakes, cookies, donuts, pies, pastries, and candy
- This can help you lose weight

Avoid foods with *trans* fat

- Store-bought foods like biscuits, cakes, cookies, muffins, and pies
- Microwave popcorn and canned frosting
- Fast foods like French fries and hamburgers

Move More

- Exercise helps lower your LDL-C
- Move for 30-45 minutes 5-7 days each week
- Walk briskly, ride a bike, dance
- If you haven't been active, talk to your doctor before you start

Eating to Lower Your LDL-C

Breakfast: Cooked oat cereal with frozen berries, 1 TBSP ground flaxseed, and 1% milk

Lunch: Sandwich made with tuna packed in water and 1 TBSP mayo, baby carrots, and an apple

Dinner: Grilled chicken with no skin, barley, mixed green salad with 1 TBSP oil and vinegar dressing

Snacks: Non-fat Greek yogurt with banana slices, ¼ cup unsalted mixed nuts, veggie slices and hummus

The "Building a Heart-Healthy Plate" tear sheet has more ideas.

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey.