

CHOLESTEROL LOWERING DIET

There is now ample evidence to confirm that reducing your total blood cholesterol to levels below 200 and raising the level of HDL will significantly reduce your risk of heart disease. The following dietary and natural medicine program will introduce you to a healthy eating lifestyle that will help accomplish these goals.

WHAT TO DO:

1. ADD FIBER TO YOUR DIET

Aim for 2/3 cup oat bran cereal per day; either 1/3 cup oat bran cereal and 2 oat bran muffins per day or 4 oat bran muffins. You must also drink 8 glasses of water to keep the fiber soft and prevent constipation. If you can't eat a lot of oat bran, don't despair, use beans (soybeans, pinto beans, navy beans, kidney beans, lima beans, split peas, garbanzo beans, lentils, etc.) One cup of cooked beans contains the same amount of soluble fiber as 2/3 cup oat bran.

Example: You can eat 2 oat bran muffins for breakfast and a bowl of chili (containing 1/2 cup cooked beans) for lunch to get your daily quota. Don't be afraid that you'll get bored with this diet. Legumes are among the most versatile of all foods. Try bean burritos, hearty bean soup, toss kidney beans in a pasta salad, puree garbanzo beans with pickles and low fat dressing to make a sandwich spread, stir fry vegetables with firm tofu, etc. Dried or canned beans work just as well. Rinse canned beans with water, however, before using to reduce added salt. Good fruit fiber snacks are found in apples, raisins, prunes, figs.

2. EAT COLDWATER FISH

At least 2 or 3 times each week, as a healthy alternative to red meat. Choose salmon, herring, sardines, or mackerel, which are rich in heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

3. REDUCE FAT IN YOUR DIET

In general cut down on beef and dairy products to help achieve a diet of less than 30% fat. AVOID FRIED FOODS. Select the leanest red meat cuts such as flank and tenderloin. Trim away all visible fat. Limit red meat meals to three times each week. When possible substitute poultry for red meat i.e. use ground turkey or chicken breast instead of hamburger meat in chili. Choose low-fat or nonfat milk/yogurt and other dairy products. Avoid high fat cheddar cheese and cream cheeses. Instead try ricotta, mozzarella and low-fat cottage cheese. Utilize extra-virgin olive oil in small amounts instead of any other oil or butter.

4. EXERCISE 1/2 HOUR 5 DAYS PER WEEK

To help raise the protective HDL levels. Brisk walking is excellent, also good is bicycle riding, rowing, cross country skiing, swimming.

READ YOUR FOOD LABELS

Avoid: (they raise cholesterol)

Saturated fats, coconut, palm, hydrogenated oils of (all types)

Fried foods

Mayonnaise

Hamburger meat/pork etc.

Replace with:

Olive oil

Grease pans with non-stick spray (sparingly), butter not margarine.

Light mayonnaise, low fat yogurt

Ground turkey, chicken breast (remove skin)

Olive oil, lemon juice. Occasional low fat dressing.