



There's lots more information below



Taking simple steps to help lower your cholesterol can ultimately protect your heart health for the future.

If there is a history of high cholesterol in your family, it is better to be aware of this and seek advice from your doctor.

Otherwise, maintaining a healthy lifestyle can improve your chances of keeping cholesterol at a recommended level.

There are resources developed especially for the public which provide extra information on cholesterol and heart health including;

WWW	<a href="http://www.irishheart.ie">www.irishheart.ie</a>
	<a href="http://www.cholesterol.ie">www.cholesterol.ie</a>
	<a href="http://www.who.org">www.who.org</a>
	<a href="http://www.americanheart.com">www.americanheart.com</a>

Alternatively, always consult with your doctor if you are concerned with your cholesterol levels.

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Careline:

Web:



♥	The happy heart guide
	Simple ways to help lower your cholesterol



Lowering your cholesterol levels, or even being aware of the need to pursue a lifestyle that will help keep your cholesterol levels low is not difficult. In fact, there are many simple ways to help reduce your cholesterol levels which will improve your heart health and ultimately lead to a healthier, happier you!

This leaflet will look at what cholesterol is, why it's important to know your cholesterol levels, the good and bad cholesterol types and little things you can do to lower your cholesterol levels which will help safeguard your health for the future!

Cholesterol can be reduced by making lifestyle changes – such as a healthy diet and exercise, by eating foods proven to lower cholesterol and by medicines. Your doctor will advise the best method for you.

## what is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a natural type of fat found in your blood that is actually important and necessary. The body needs a certain amount of cholesterol for blood cells to produce important hormones.

However, if there is too much cholesterol in your body then it can lead to it sticking to the walls of your arteries or blood vessels and in the process it can restrict the flow of

# Knowing your enemy

Cholesterol is an important component of the body's make-up, helping to maintain healthy cells as well as inducing the production of hormones and Vitamin D. However, there are differing types of cholesterol known as **HDL cholesterol** and **LDL cholesterol**, one good, the other bad so to speak.

HDL cholesterol or high density lipoprotein is known as good or healthy cholesterol as it absorbs excess cholesterol in the arteries and carries it to the liver where it is broken down and passed out of the body.

LDL cholesterol or low density lipoprotein is known as bad cholesterol. LDL cholesterol is a major carrier of cholesterol in the blood but when levels are too high, the cholesterol content can be deposited in the walls of the arteries, making them narrow. In turn, this can reduce the blood supply to the heart or brain. Remember that eating foods that are high in saturated fat can raise LDL cholesterol so try to avoid these where possible.

blood in the body. In some instances, the build up of cholesterol can totally block artery walls which can lead to heart attack or stroke.

Almost 70% of cholesterol is made in the liver and small intestine, the rest coming from your diet. If you have too high a level of cholesterol in your diet, you can reduce this through a number of ways like diet, exercise and medicines.

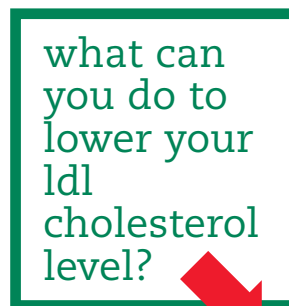


Be sure to check  
if you're at risk!



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- ♥ Sometimes, high cholesterol can be traced back to lifestyle choices like drinking too much alcohol or smoking, or can be linked to a family history of high cholesterol levels.
- ♥ It is good to know what might be a trigger of high cholesterol levels so people who should be especially conscious include;
- ♥ Smokers as this has been linked to reducing HDL-C and can also cause heart attacks or strokes
- ♥ People with stress or high blood pressure
- ♥ Obesity can lower HDL-C levels and lead to an increase of LDL-C levels
- ♥ People with certain medical conditions such as kidney damage or under active thyroid should be mindful as these conditions have been linked to high blood pressure
- ♥ A lack of exercise can increase LDL-C levels and reduce HDL-C levels
- ♥ High cholesterol can also be hereditary so if you are aware of this history in your immediate family, discuss it with your doctor



Although high levels of cholesterol can be genetic, a major cause of high cholesterol is by eating foods which have a high content of saturated fats such as burgers, chips fast-food, butter, fatty meat, cakes, biscuits and chocolate.

If you want to know if a food is high in saturated fats, check the label on processed and ready-made foods for the amount of saturated fats. If the food label also uses the word hydrogenated, this means that it contains trans-fats which are also known to raise LDL cholesterol levels so these should be avoided as much as possible.



Maintaining recommended levels of cholesterol can be achieved through a healthy balanced diet. Eating fibre-rich breakfasts as well as fruit and vegetables throughout the day is an excellent way to manage your cholesterol levels.



If you are under instruction from your doctor to lower your cholesterol levels, there are food including spreads, yogurt and milk which prevent your body absorbing cholesterol. These foods generally contain plant sterols or stanols which have been clinically proven to stop the absorption of cholesterol into the body. Using these products as part of a balanced diet has been proven to help lower cholesterol.



Foods containing plant sterols such as those used in Dairygold Heart, in combination with a low fat diet, are clinically proven to lower cholesterol levels by up to 10%.



- ♥ Eat omega oil rich fish such as salmon or trout
- ♥ Eat more fruit and vegetables
- ♥ Eat more wholegrain cereals and breads, jacket potatoes, rice and pasta
- ♥ Choose low fat dairy products
- ♥ Choose cholesterol lowering spreads
  
- ♥ Opt for lean meat
- ♥ Remember that it is better to grill or oven-bake food rather than fry
- ♥ If you smoke try to stop
- ♥ Drink less alcohol
- ♥ Be more physically active
  
- ♥ Maintain a healthy weight
- ♥ Have regular cholesterol checks with your doctor

### plant sterols

Plant sterols work by helping to inhibit the absorption of cholesterol in the small intestine. This means we absorb less cholesterol from the food we eat and that is made by our body. As part of a healthy diet, Dairygold Heart has been clinically proven to help reduce cholesterol levels by up to 10%

## Measuring cholesterol levels

The Joint Taskforce of European and other Societies on Coronary Prevention has set guidelines for health professionals on total cholesterol, HDL Cholesterol, LDL Cholesterol and triglycerides levels. These guidelines provide health professional with a basis to judge the results of your cholesterol test.

Although the guidelines provide a basis to establish cholesterol levels, different numbers will mean different things so it is important to discuss your results with your doctor who will set a goal for you.

Goals for the general population

Goals for people with clinically established cardiovascular disease and patients with diabetes

Total cholesterol less than 5

Total cholesterol less than 4.5

LDL-C less than 3

LDL-C less than 2.5

HDL more than 1

HDL more than 1

Blood cholesterol is measured in millimoles per litre (mmol/L), the results of which will provide levels of LDL-C, HDL-C, total cholesterol and triglycerides.