

LDL CHOLESTEROL

LDL, or “bad” cholesterol, is the major cholesterol carrier in the blood. High LDL levels are associated with increased risk for coronary heart disease. Total LDL levels in your blood should be less than 130 mg/dl. Optimal levels are below 100 mg/dl.

Tips for Improving your LDL Cholesterol:

1. Lose weight if you need to.

- Aim for a BMI between 18.5 and 25

2. Exercise.

- Your goal for physical activity should be *at least* 30 minutes of exercise a day 5 days a week. Running, walking, swimming, cycling, and another endurance exercises are especially good for your heart.

3. Limit fat, especially saturated fats, in your diet. Saturated fat is found mostly in foods from animals and some plants.

- Foods from animals that contain saturated fats include beef, beef fat, veal, lamb, pork, lard, poultry fat, butter, cream, milk, cheeses and other dairy products made from whole and 2 percent milk.
- Foods from plants that contain saturated fat include coconut, coconut oil, palm oil and palm kernel oil (often called tropical oils), and cocoa butter.

4. Aim for 10-25 grams of soluble fiber daily.

- Good sources of soluble fiber include oats/oat bran, barley, flax seed, dried beans and peas, fruits (figs, grapefruit, oranges, prunes, pears), vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots).

5. Incorporate monounsaturated fats into your diet.

- Good sources of monounsaturated fats include olive oil, peanut oil, canola oil, peanuts, pecans, almonds, and avocados.

6. Incorporate sterols and stanols into your diet.

- These are found naturally in fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, cereals, dried beans and peas, vegetable oils, rice bran, and wheat germ. Many products such as some margarines have stanols and sterols added to them.

