



## In This Issue

### Eating Right

Let food be thy medicine, and medicine be thy food. - Hippocrates, 431 BC

How can you have more energy, fewer health problems and a better quality of life? By eating right. This month, Member Matters focuses on how to look and feel your best by eating wisely and how to feel more confident about your body.

- Six Tips to Lower Your Cholesterol
- Open Up and Share Your Feelings
- 20 Tips for Weight Control
- Ten Steps to a Positive Body Image



## Six Tips to Lower Your Cholesterol

If you have a total blood cholesterol level that is borderline or high, here are six steps you can take to lower it:

### 1. **Cut Back on Fat in Your Diet**

Limit the fat in your daily diet. You can reduce fat by eating less fatty cuts of red meats and fewer foods prepared with animal fats and oils. Use fewer "added" fats, such as butter, margarine, salad dressings, mayonnaise and sauces. Avoid fried

foods. Here's a good rule of thumb: make sure that no more than 30 percent of your daily calories are from fat.

2. **Know the Type of Fat You're Eating and Use Unsaturated Fats**

Saturated fat raises your blood cholesterol level more than anything else you eat, so replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats may help lower your blood cholesterol levels.

Saturated fats are those fats that are solid at room temperature. They raise serum cholesterol levels. You'll find them in animal products such as bacon, cold cuts, frankfurters, and even cheese and whole milk, as well as a few plant products, including coconut or palm oil.

Be aware of foods such as cookies, crackers and others that may contain palm or coconut oils on their ingredient list. Remember to read food labels! Unsaturated fats come in two forms: polyunsaturated and monounsaturated.

Safflower oil, sunflower oil, sesame oil, corn oil and fish are good sources of polyunsaturated fats. Polyunsaturated fats can help lower serum cholesterol levels.

Monounsaturated fats can be found in olive oil, peanut oil and canola oil. Research suggests these are also effective in lowering your cholesterol level.

3. **Eat More Carbohydrates and Dietary Fiber**

Choose foods high in complex carbohydrates (starch and fiber). Dietary fiber is that part of plant food that is not completely digested. As it passes through the intestines, it helps to eliminate unneeded fat and cholesterol.

Complex carbohydrates contain little or no saturated fat and no cholesterol. They include whole grain breads and cereals, oats, barley, brown rice, dry beans, and fruits and vegetables (especially those with skins).

4. **Eat Fewer High Cholesterol Foods**

You should limit your intake of foods high in cholesterol to less than 300 mg a day. Cholesterol is found in animal products such as egg yolks, meats (especially organs like liver and kidney), dairy products and some shellfish.

There is cholesterol in both high fat and low fat foods. Even if a food is low in fat, it can be high in cholesterol or vice versa. Make sure to read your food labels for content analysis on both fat and cholesterol. And double-check serving sizes.

5. **Exercise Regularly**

If you want to be your healthiest, you should aim for 20 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week. Aerobic exercise is a great way to increase your high-density lipoproteins (HDL) or "good cholesterol" level. And regular exercise can help you reduce stress, feel better and increase your energy.

Brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, rowing and aerobic dance are examples of aerobic activity that can help lower your blood cholesterol level.

6. **Know Your Optimal Weight and Maintain It**

Your weight and body fat are important because a high percentage of body fat can increase your susceptibility to heart disease. To find out your optimal body weight, or

if you're interested in losing weight, talk to your health care provider. Together, you can determine if a weight loss or lifestyle change program would be appropriate.

### **TAKE THESE STEPS AND TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH**

Make an action plan with the help of your physician. The important thing is to know your cholesterol score and make a change for the better in your lifestyle.

How much your blood cholesterol is lowered depends on how high it was to begin with and how consistently you maintain dietary and exercise guidelines.

For some people, heredity may be a major factor in high blood cholesterol levels. If this is your situation, modifying your lifestyle may not sufficiently lower your cholesterol. Your physician can determine if heredity is a factor and if medication is appropriate.



## **Open Up and Share Your Feelings**

Psychologists have determined that sharing your feelings not only has a positive psychological effect, but may also be good for your physical health. Bottling up your feelings is generally not good for you.

You should try to find people that you can open up to and talk to about things that are troubling you. With high technology like cell phones, the Internet and instant messaging, finding the means to communicate with others has become much easier.

You should also consider that some of the things you are feeling are such that just talking to someone will help. You just may need to get it off your chest.

With other things, you may need to speak to someone you trust in order to open up and to share. You will find that when you talk things out and share you will feel better, reduce your tension, and may even feel physically better.



## **20 Tips to Control Weight**

1. Keep a food diary. Write down all the food and beverages you consume for one week. Note the circumstances and time of day (mealtime, watching TV, while upset, etc.).
2. Set realistic goals. Remember, you put the weight on one day at a time, and that is how it will come off. Two pounds is the maximum you should lose in one week.
3. Drink plenty of water. Try to drink between six and eight glasses every day.

4. Think nutrition. Choose foods that are high in nutritional value and low in fat and calories (e.g., vegetables, fruit and low fat dairy products).
5. Cut down on portions. Reduce the amount of food you put on your plate. Use a smaller plate. Eat slowly. Stop eating when you are full.
6. Eat balanced meals. Plan your meals to include foods high in complex carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, grains and starches). Reduce the fat in your diet to below 30 percent per day.
7. Increase your exercise. This will burn extra calories by increasing your metabolic rate. It will also help decrease your appetite.
8. Remove temptations. Don't buy high calorie snacks. Throw out all candy, nuts, ice cream and junk food.
9. Make smarter choices. Stay away from fast foods. Include plenty of wholesome, nutritious foods.
10. Read labels. Fresh foods are a better choice for controlling the fat in your diet.
11. Change habits; don't just diet. Use a sensible, safe approach to weight control. For long-term results, concentrate on making gradual changes in your eating habits.
12. Cooking methods. How you cook is as important as what you cook. Broiling, baking, roasting and stewing are the best methods. Avoid frying.
13. Cut down on alcohol. Eliminate empty calories. Substitute water or low-calorie beverages.
14. Plan for difficult situations. Eat something before parties and other get-togethers. Avoid nibbling.
15. Join a group. Look for one offering nutritional education, behavior modification techniques and emotional support.
16. Grocery shopping. Make a list and stick to it. Stay away from the snack aisles. Eat before you go.
17. Determine your ideal weight. Take a body composition test. Learn how much of your weight is fat and how much is lean muscle mass.
18. Be aware of health consequences. A lifestyle that promotes excess weight is a lifestyle with added health risks.
19. Use substitution techniques. The key to successful weight control is replacing unhealthy foods with wholesome, nutritious foods.
20. Still need help? For additional information, ask your physician.



## Ten Steps to a Positive Body Image

We all have days when we'd rather not look in the mirror. But even on those days it's important to hold our head high and carry ourselves with dignity and respect. Here are some ways to think positively about your body.

- Appreciate your body and all of the amazing things it can do, such as run, dance, breathe and laugh.
- Give yourself credit for your positive qualities. Consider journaling a top-10 list of things you like about yourself - things that aren't related to how much you weigh or what you look like. Refer to it whenever you're feeling down.
- Remind yourself that true beauty is more than skin deep. Look for ways to improve your personality and character.
- Use the time and energy that you might have spent worrying about food, calories and your weight to do something to help others. Reaching out to others will help you feel better about yourself and can make a positive change in our world.
- Surround yourself with positive people. It is easier to feel good about yourself and your body when you are around others who are supportive and who recognize the importance of liking yourself just as you are.
- Look at yourself as a whole person. When you see yourself in a mirror or in your mind, choose not to focus on specific body parts. See yourself as you want others to see you - as a whole person.
- Get moving! Exercise, in moderation of course, not only improves your health, it releases endorphins that boost your mood and help you feel better about your appearance.
- Wear clothes that are comfortable and that make you feel good about your body. Work with your body, not against it.
- Become a critical viewer of social and media messages. Understand and question images, slogans or attitudes that make you feel bad about yourself or your body.
- Do something nice for yourself - something to pamper your body. Take a bubble bath, make time for a nap or find a peaceful place outside to relax.