

## Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes [TLC]

### Diet

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance. It can build up on the walls of blood vessels and block the flow of blood. This can lead to a heart attack or a stroke. You can take steps to lower your cholesterol and help your heart.

A diet high in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol can raise your blood cholesterol to unhealthy levels. Choosing a diet lower in saturated fat and trans fat can help. If you eat plenty of whole grains, vegetables and fruits at your meals, you will not need to fill up on the unhealthy, fatty foods.

**Saturated fat** is found in fatty meats and full-fat dairy products. This fat is usually solid at room temperature. It is also found in coconut and palm oils.

**Trans fat** can be found in store-bought baked goods and snacks. Oils that have been hardened through *partial hydrogenation* are high in trans fat. They are often found in cookies, crackers, muffins and donuts.

**Cholesterol** in the food you eat also raises cholesterol levels in your body – but not as much as saturated fat. Since cholesterol and saturated fats are often found in the same foods, limiting both can benefit your cholesterol numbers. Cholesterol is found only in foods that come from animals, like eggs, liver, meats and milk.

Other diet options:

Fiber comes from plants. Foods high in fiber can help reduce your risk of heart disease. Fiber is also good for your digestive tract. Foods rich in fiber can help you feel full on fewer calories – which make high-fiber foods a good choice when you are trying to lose weight.

There are two kinds of fiber; both have health benefits. They are soluble fiber and insoluble fiber. **Soluble** fiber [also known as viscous fiber] is the fiber that helps reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering LDL cholesterol. Soluble fiber does this by blocking cholesterol and fats from being absorbed into the blood stream. TLC recommends that you get in at least 5-10 grams of soluble fiber a day – more is better. Soluble fiber can be found in some grains [such as oats], beans [such as kidney beans], many fruits and vegetables *Note:* Insoluble fiber is the fiber that helps with elimination; bran is an example of this type of fiber.

Certain food products that contain **plant sterols and stanols** [for example, cholesterol-lowering margarines] can also be added to the TLC diet to boost its LDL-lowering power. Examples of supplements containing this ingredient are Centrum Specialist *Heart* vitamin and Nature Made *CholestOff*.

Fish rich in **omega-3 fatty acids** [salmon, tuna, mackerel, bluefish, trout and sardines] are recommended two times each week because these fats may decrease your risk of heart disease. Some people with elevated Triglycerides can benefit from a fish oil supplement. Talk to your Health Care Provider to discuss if this would be of benefit to you.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Avoid whole and 2% milk, butter, high-fat cuts of meat, high-fat sauces and gravies. Avoid duck or goose. Avoid most hot dogs including chicken and turkey dogs. Cut out meats like bacon and sausage. Avoid solid white shortening and limit items that contain ‘partially hydrogenated oils.’ Avoid coconut oil and palm kernel oil.
  - **Instead** - Use 1% or skim milk, low-fat or non-fat yogurt, lean cuts of meat, skinless chicken and turkey. Trim meat of visible fat before cooking. Use liquid oil in cooking, such as olive oil and canola oil. Use tub or liquid margarines. Substitute ham, Canadian bacon and low-fat chicken sausages. Bake, grill or broil meats, chicken and fish rather than frying
- Avoid egg yolks. Avoid liver [liverwurst] and other organ meats
  - **Instead** - Enjoy egg whites and egg substitutes. Try beans or soy foods instead of meats.
- Do not eat snack foods or appetizers that have been fried [like chicken wings, fries, chips].
  - **Instead** - Try chicken teriyaki as an appetizer; snack on fresh fruit. Try baked chips and pretzels. Eat more whole grains. Try raw veggies with hummus or salsa for a snack. Try snacking on nuts – especially almonds.
- Avoid whole milk cheeses such as cheddar, American and ricotta.
  - **Instead** - Look for cheeses with 0-5 grams of fat per ounce [the lower the better].
- Avoid fried fish.
  - **Instead** - Eat more fresh, unprocessed frozen or water-packed fish. Enjoy fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids [tuna, salmon, mackerel, trout, bluefish and sardines] twice a week.
- Avoid premium ice cream, candy made with chocolate, regular puddings and commercial cakes, pies, muffins and cookies
  - **Instead** - Look for low-fat products such as angel food cake, sorbet, sherbet, nonfat frozen yogurt, popsicles, pudding made with skim milk, and gelatin.\*

\* *For some people who have very high Triglyceride levels, desserts may need to be modified. Try ‘sugar-free’ versions of gelatin, pudding and popsicles. Avoid sherbet, sorbet and ices.*

Some people try diet and lifestyle changes but still cannot lower their blood cholesterol. In those cases, a drug that lowers cholesterol may be prescribed by your doctor. *It is still important to eat heart-healthy foods, get some activity and stay at a healthy weight when taking these drugs. This can help reduce the amount of medicine needed.*

## Exercise

Exercise may help reduce heart disease risk in several ways. Along with proper diet, exercise may help reduce LDL cholesterol; HDL cholesterol may increase. Exercise could help in weight reduction – and decrease other risk factors for heart disease like diabetes and high blood pressure. Regular physical activity can boost the way you feel. It may give you more energy; help you relax and cope better with stress; build your confidence; help with the quality of your sleep at night; provide you with another way to enjoy your time with family and friends. Moving your body is also a way to keep physical hunger signals in check.

Aim to exercise every day – or most days of the week. Walking is a great way to exercise. You can also vary your routine with swimming, biking, dancing, jogging, skating, skiing and exercise classes. Even yard work and housework can count as exercise. You can break up your exercise routine into multiple sessions throughout the day if you have a busy schedule. Make sure each session is at least 10 minutes long. Some physical activity is better than none. Keep a comfortable pair of walking shoes with you – so you can take a fitness break instead of a coffee break.

Not a walker? Many activities can count as ‘exercise’ so find a diversion that interests you. Here are more ideas for ways to *move your body*:

Jump rope	Bike – outdoors or indoors on a stationary bike
Tennis	Table tennis [ping pong]
Hike	Kayak
Swim	Boxing and kick-boxing
Dance	Gardening
Frisbee	Bowling
Ski	Skating – on ice skates or inline skates

When exercising **moderately**, you should be able to *talk*, but not *sing*. During **vigorous** activity, you should not be able to say more than a few words before having to breathe again. *Make sure you exercise at the intensity that is right for you.*

Please keep safety in mind as you plan your exercise. If you walk outside, be aware of your surroundings. Go in groups when possible. When walking at dawn, dusk or at night, wear a reflective vest or bright colored clothing.

**If you have had a heart attack or chest pain in the past, talk to your health care provider before starting exercise.**

Lifestyle Activities. Your exercise does not have to be planned. You can make small day-to-day changes to improve your health. Make a point to sit less and move more! Walk the dog. Walk while you talk on a cell phone or cordless phone. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Put away the TV remote [if you can] – get up to change the channel. March in place during TV commercials.

#### Resources to investigate:

- Your local gym or fitness center
- Your local Y
- Your local community center and senior center[for classes and to use exercise equipment]
- Enlist a group of friends & neighbors – start your own walking club
- Your local school system [for classes, pool for water exercises]
- Pedometer [track your steps, compete against yourself!]
- Apps for your smart phone
- Videos [DVDs] and classes ‘on-demand’ through your cable service

#### A Sample Daily Walking Program

*This program is only a guide. Your fitness walking sessions may be longer or shorter based on your ability and the advice of your health care provider*

Weeks	Warm-up Time <i>Walk slowly &amp; stretch</i>	Brisk- walk time	Cool-down Time <i>Walk slowly &amp; stretch</i>	Total Time
<b>Weeks 1-2</b>	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	15 minutes
<b>Weeks 3-4</b>	5 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes	20 minutes
<b>Weeks 5-6</b>	5 minutes	15 minutes	5 minutes	25 minutes
<b>Weeks 7-8</b>	5 minutes	20 minutes	5 minutes	30 minutes

*It is important to get regular check-ups, lab work, and follow up care as discussed with your physician. Please consult with your physician for more information.*

To print a copy of our *Diet, Exercise, Weight, and Cholesterol Weekly Journal* to assist you in better managing your health, please click on the following link:

[www.dedhammedical.com](http://www.dedhammedical.com)

## Interested in more information?

**American Heart Association** has extensive information of changing to a heart healthy lifestyle, including how to start exercise, nutrition and smoking cessation. Videos and risk assessment tools are also included on their HeartHub *for Patients* web page. [www.heart.org/HEARTORG](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG) or [www.hearhub.org](http://www.hearhub.org)

**National Heart Lung and Blood Institute** [National Institutes of Health] has detailed information on achieving a healthy weight – including exercise tips, heart disease, cholesterol and healthy cooking. [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/index.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/index.htm)

**Weight-control Information Network** is an information service of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Many publications can be viewed [or ordered] on their web site. It provides physical activity tips for people of all ages and sizes. [win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/index.htm](http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/index.htm)

**Shape Up America! Healthy Weight For Life** offers multiple tools, publications and a support center. [www.shapeup.org](http://www.shapeup.org)

The **President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports** has links to numerous fitness organizations. You can also access the *President's Challenge* [a program that encourages all Americans to make being active part of their everyday lives. No matter what your activity and fitness level, the President's Challenge can help motivate you to improve.] [www.fitness.gov/resources\\_health.htm](http://www.fitness.gov/resources_health.htm)

The **American Dietetic Association** offers many practical tips in their Public Info Center. Information on Heart Health and achieving a healthy weight is available. [www.eatright.org/Public/](http://www.eatright.org/Public/)

The **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** publish many educational materials for patients. These can be accessed on-line as well as podcasts. [www.cdc.gov/heartdisease](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease)

A comprehensive list of fiber in foods, including **Soluble Fiber** can be found at [http://huhs.harvard.edu/assets/File/OurServices/Service\\_Nutrition\\_Fiber.pdf](http://huhs.harvard.edu/assets/File/OurServices/Service_Nutrition_Fiber.pdf) [accessed 9/28/11].