

Cholesterol Education Month



Can You Burn Off Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of lipid, just as fats are. However, unlike fat, cholesterol can't be exercised off, sweated out or burned for energy. It is found only in animal products, including meat, chicken, fish, eggs, organ meats and high-fat dairy products.

Is Cholesterol Good or Bad?

- Just as homemade oil-and-vinegar dressing separates into a watery pool with a fat-slick topping, so also would fats and cholesterol if they were dumped directly into the blood. To solve this dilemma, the body transports fat and cholesterol by coating them with a water-soluble "bubble" of protein. This protein-fat bubble is called a lipoprotein.
- Low-density lipoproteins (LDLs) carry cholesterol to the tissues. This is "bad" cholesterol, since high LDL levels are linked to increased risk for heart disease.
- High-density lipoproteins (HDLs) carry excess cholesterol back to the liver, which processes and excretes the cholesterol. HDLs are "good" cholesterol; The more HDL you have, the lower your risk for developing heart disease.
- HDLs and LDLs are found only in your blood, not in food.



The Fat Primer

The fats that supply calories, float in your blood and accumulate in your thighs and hips are called "triglycerides." They can be saturated or unsaturated, and the unsaturated ones can be either monounsaturated or polyunsaturated. For every ounce of triglycerides you eat, you add 250 calories (or 9 calories per gram -- the weight of a raisin) to your diet. Only saturated fats increase blood levels of cholesterol and heart-disease risk.

Which Ones Are Saturated?

In general, the harder a fat, the more saturated it is. Beef and dairy fats are mostly saturated fats. Liquid oils are usually unsaturated fats, including monounsaturated fats in olive and

canola oils and polyunsaturated fats in safflower, corn, soybean and fish oils. Coconut, palm and palm kernel oils are exceptions to the rule; these liquid vegetable oils are highly saturated fats.

The bottom line is:

- Eat less fat, especially saturated fat.
- Limit your intake of fatty meats, fatty dairy products and processed foods that contain hydrogenated vegetable oil.
- Use olive oil, but in moderation if you're watching your weight.
- Fill your plate with fruit, vegetables, whole grains, fish and legumes.

Source: <http://www.medicinenet.com>

Courtesy of Wellness Proposals