

Four everyday ways to manage high cholesterol



Discover little changes that can help make each day in your heart-healthy journey count.

Managing your high cholesterol

If you have high cholesterol, you're not alone. High cholesterol affects more than 95 million Americans. The good news is that high cholesterol is a largely controllable risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Reaching your cholesterol goals can take time

If you're not satisfied with your current statin, discuss it with your doctor. Don't stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor, as you could be putting yourself back at risk.

1 Stick with your statin as directed by your doctor

Statins are proven to help lower blood cholesterol—if you haven't reached your cholesterol goals yet, keep at it!

A statin can help you manage high cholesterol but cannot cure it. That's why it's important to keep taking it. Even though you can't feel it, your statin is working hard to lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Remember to schedule regular visits with your doctor and have your cholesterol checked with a simple blood test.

2 Eat a heart-healthy diet

Fit more fiber into your diet

Choose foods that are high in soluble fiber, such as peas, legumes, apples, oranges, pears, berries, broccoli, and oatmeal.

Prepare with care

Instead of frying your food, try boiling, grilling, roasting, or poaching.

Avoid empty calories

Foods with empty calories (like soda, cookies, and ice cream) are loaded with sugar and/or fat and lack essential vitamins and minerals.

Look for monounsaturated fat

Replacing a higher carbohydrate diet with one rich in predominantly monounsaturated fat (such as in almonds, avocados, and olive oil) can help improve cholesterol levels.

Steer clear of trans and saturated fats

Avoid saturated fats (which mainly come from animal-based foods) and trans fats (found in many processed foods made with partially hydrogenated oils) as they raise your low-density lipoprotein (bad) cholesterol (LDL-C). Trans fats are particularly unhealthy because they also reduce high-density lipoprotein (good) cholesterol (HDL-C).

Your Guide to Heart Health



3 Get your exercise

Take time to exercise

To reduce cholesterol levels, the American Heart Association (AHA) recommends 40 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity exercise 3 to 4 times a week.

It's fun to get fit!

You can make exercise part of your daily routine without it feeling like a chore. Try taking the stairs, playing with your kids, swimming, biking, gardening, playing sports, or taking a brisk stroll (which according to the AHA is one of the easiest ways to improve heart health). Remember to always talk to your doctor before starting or changing any exercise program.

The health benefits of regular physical activity are hard to ignore. The more you are active, the more you may be able to improve your cholesterol levels.



Start out slow

Give your body time to gradually build up to 40 minutes 3 to 4 times a week (or whatever amount of time your doctor recommends).



Mix things up

Do a variety of activities or change up the scenery/location to stay interested.



Patterns help

Try to exercise at the same time of day so it becomes a regular part of your schedule.



Set reasonable goals

Keep your expectations reasonable, and don't get discouraged if you miss a day or two.

4 Stay motivated to stay healthy

Be prepared for every doctor's visit

Prior to your visit, list out any questions or important information you want to be sure to discuss with your doctor.

Find helpful information

TakeCholesterolToHeart.com has tips on how you can master the cholesterol conversation with your doctor.

Create a support network of family and friends

Keeping your support network in the loop with your progress and milestones can help you stay motivated, on track, and accountable.

Wake up every morning with a positive thought

What is keeping you motivated? Wake up every morning and reaffirm to yourself why you are committed to your heart health.



You got this!

Sticking with your statin, eating a heart-healthy diet, and exercising regularly are all part of the plan to lower your cholesterol and keep you on a heart-healthy routine.