



Cholesterol is a fatty, waxy substance that is mainly produced by your liver. We need cholesterol for our body cells, hormones, vitamins and bile salt. However if we have too much cholesterol in circulation it can deposit in our artery walls causing them to narrow and harden and therefore increase our risk of heart disease.

Cholesterol is carried in the blood attached to proteins known as lipoproteins. **High Density Lipoproteins (HDL)** and is often referred to as ‘The Good Cholesterol’ and it helps remove cholesterol from the artery walls. To increase HDL levels you need to do moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes on most days, include small amounts of polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated fats in the diet – these are in foods such as avocado’s, oily fish such as salmon/tuna/mackerel/herring, nuts, seeds and olive/canola, sunflower oils, and whole grain foods.

Another carrier is **Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL)** and often called ‘The Bad Cholesterol’ as it deposits cholesterol in artery walls. To lower bad cholesterol you need to eat less fat – especially saturated and trans fats. These fats are found mainly in animal products such as meat, butter, cream, cheese, dripping, fried food and lard. Non-animal sources of saturated fats are coconut creams/milks and palm oil – and these are often used in commercially baked biscuits and cakes.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO LOWER YOUR CHOLESTEROL?

- Have more servings of dried peas (e.g. chickpeas) and beans (e.g. kidney beans), soy products, oat cereals, whole grains and high fibre cereals.
- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Avoid excessive drinking of alcohol
- Check food labels and choose those lowest in saturated and trans fats
- **DO NOT** have foods prepared with butter, hydrogenated oil, coconut or palm oil
- **DO NOT** eat white meat fat, chicken skin or processed meats or chicken
- Eat generous amounts of fruits and vegetables
- Include fish in your dinner menu at least 2 times per week.
- A fasting blood test will determine your lipid profile. An ideal profile is:

Total Cholesterol (TC)	Less than 4.0 mmol/L
LDL Cholesterol	Less than 2.3 mmol/L
HDL Cholesterol	Greater than 1.0 mmol/L
TC / HDL Ratio	Less than 4.5 mmol/L