

TRANSCRIPTION

Whether you are in the 18 percent of the Americans with high cholesterol or not, you can benefit from living a low cholesterol lifestyle. A low cholesterol lifestyle involves making conscious decisions to eat, play and live in a way that will help to lower your levels of harmful LDL cholesterol. Cholesterol is a fatty substance that is found in the body. Some cholesterol is necessary for basic functions. But here is the catch. The body usually makes all the cholesterol that it needs. With this in mind, it makes sense to lower your intake of fats. In fact, it is best to limit the total fat intake to less than 30 per cent of your daily calories. All fats are not created equally, though. They fall into different categories: saturated, unsaturated and trans-fatty acids. Saturated fat is found primarily in foods from animals like beef, eggs, milk and cheese. Because saturated fat is the main dietary cause of high blood cholesterol, it is best to limit it to less than 7 per cent of your daily calories. The unsaturated fats are found in many fish, nuts, seeds and plant oils. They should make up about half of your daily fat intake. Perhaps the worst fats are trans-fatty acids and hydrogenated fats. Trace amounts of these are found in animal products. They are also formed during a process of hydrogenation, which is how margarine, shortening and cooking oils are made. Understanding and limiting your intake of fats is an important step toward a cholesterol-friendly diet but it is essential to increase your fiber, too. Consuming 25 – 30 mg of fiber-rich foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains daily can help lower LDL cholesterol. A healthier diet is a great start. And exercise can make your program even more efficient. Aim for 30 minutes at least 3 times a week. While physical activity is not known to impact bad LDL cholesterol, it does increase the level of HDL or good cholesterol, lowering the risk of heart disease. And finally, one of the most important things you can do to lower your cholesterol levels is to stop smoking or decrease the time you spend time around smokers. Smoking is a double blow. It lowers the levels of HDL cholesterol and makes your body resistant to heart healthy exercise. High LDL cholesterol is a bad news, but lowering your cholesterol can help. Remember to see your doctor before you begin a new exercise or diet program.