

Lower cholesterol the natural way!

Millions of Americans take a statin to lower their cholesterol. While these drugs are powerful allies in the fight against cardiovascular disease, many people aren't aware that diet and exercise can play an important part in reducing cholesterol as well.

Flaxseed

Flaxseed contains two substances--soluble fiber and lignon--that block the production of LDL or "bad" cholesterol. These substances also increase the body's ability to get rid of cholesterol. Adding ground flaxseed to smoothies or oatmeal is a great way to include this cholesterol-busting food to your diet.

Oranges

Oranges are best known for being a great source of vitamin C, but they also contain other healthy compounds that can help lower cholesterol. Oranges are full of substances called phytosterols (plant sterols), a type of fat found in nuts, seeds, fruits, and vegetables. These sterols block cholesterol from being absorbed by the cells in the intestines. Beans

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Beans contain a type of fiber that is processed in the colon. Good bacteria in the colon then consume this fiber and form fatty acids from it. These fatty acids move through the body to the liver, where they block the production of "bad" (LDL) cholesterol.

Garlic

Garlic is a food with many healthy benefits. It's been found to help the cardiovascular system and there is some evidence that it can even act as an anti-fungal and an antibiotic. In terms of cholesterol management, garlic has been found to interfere with the liver's ability to make cholesterol.

Soy

Soy protein has been found to boost the effectiveness and amount of LDL receptors in the liver, thus improving the liver's ability to rid the blood of cholesterol. Its secret? Phytoestrogens, a group of naturally occurring nonsteroidal plant compounds. Try using soy milk on your cereal, eating soy nuts instead of regular nuts, or ordering soy instead of creamer or milk at your favorite coffee shop.

Apples

Apples are full of compounds called polyphenols, powerful antioxidants that help prevent the buildup of plaque in the arteries. To get the most cholesterol benefits from an apple, don't peel it. The highest concentrations of polyphenols are found in the skin and outer flesh.

Almonds

Almonds are rich in two substances that fight cholesterol: flavonoids and vitamin E. These antioxidants stop bad cholesterol from oxidizing in the body, which helps reduce the buildup of plaque in the arteries. To get the most benefit, stick to raw (not roasted) almonds that are either unsalted or salted with sea salt. Slivered raw almonds on a salad are a good way to include these nuts in your diet.

Cauliflower

Like oranges, cauliflower is one of the many foods that is rich in plant sterols (phytosterols). These will help keep cholesterol numbers down by blocking the absorption of cholesterol in the intestines. Cauliflower is also rich in the antioxidants manganese and vitamin C and the inflammation-fighting compounds vitamin K and omega-3 fatty acids. It also contains fiber, which has many health benefits.