

# NUTRITION NIBBLES

FAMILIES FIRST: NUTRITION EDUCATION AND WELLNESS SYSTEM

## CHOLESTEROL AND YOUR DIET

### What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a soft, fat-like, waxy substance found in the bloodstream and in all your body's cells. It's normal to have cholesterol. Cholesterol is an important part of a healthy body because it's used for producing cell membranes and some hormones and serves other needed bodily functions.

### Where Does It Come From?

Cholesterol comes from two sources: your body and food. Your liver and other cells in your body make about 75% of blood cholesterol. The other 25% comes from the foods you eat.

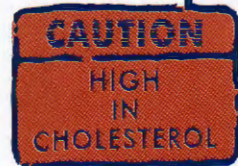
### Types of Cholesterol?

There are two types of cholesterol. Low density lipoprotein (LDL) and high density lipoprotein (HDL).

LDL, or the "bad" cholesterol, is produced naturally by the body, but many people inherit genes from family members that cause them to make too much. Eating saturated fat, trans fat and dietary cholesterol also increases how much you have. HDL is known as the "good" cholesterol because high levels of HDL seem to protect against heart attack. Some health experts believe that HDL removes excess cholesterol from arterial plaque and slows its buildup.

### What Can You Do?

The American Heart Association recommends eating lots of fruits and vegetables to keep cholesterol low. These foods will give you vitamins, minerals and fiber with few calories. They're low in fat and sodium and contain no cholesterol. Be sure to include fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C and vitamin A. Choose from all fresh, frozen, canned or dried vegetables and fruits.



**Knowing the facts about cholesterol can reduce your risk for a heart attack or stroke. But understanding what cholesterol is and how it affects your health are only the beginning.**

### To keep your cholesterol under control:

- ◆ Schedule a screening with your doctor
- ◆ Eat foods low in cholesterol and saturated fat and free of trans fat
- ◆ Maintain a healthy weight
- ◆ Be physically active
- ◆ Follow your healthcare professional advice.



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