

Eatwell plate for high cholesterol

June 2016 – by Annemette Jepsen, MCSP and nutritionist

CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol means that there is higher blood fat levels in your body than what your body normally needs and is beneficial for you.

Cholesterol is made in the liver from saturated fats (animal and dairy fat), a diet high in saturated fat raises blood cholesterol levels.

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats do not affect blood cholesterol levels and therefore we should eat foods that contain high amounts of these fats.

The liver can provide all the cholesterol the body needs, cholesterol is therefore not an essential part of the diet.

High cholesterol is caused by two reasons:

- 1) Inherited genetic factors that leads to higher blood cholesterol levels.
- 2) Is found when a disease (diabetes) or lifestyle (wrong diet, alcohol, overweight) produces high blood cholesterol levels as a complication.

DIETARY CHANGES

Two main dietary approaches to reduce cholesterol levels.

- 1) Generally reduce the amount of fat that you eat.
- 2) Using or avoiding specific foods or additives.

Fat is the richest source of calories in our diet, and is more difficult to turn into energy and burn than carbohydrates.

Fat should contain less than 30 per cent of calories for those overweight and at risk of lifestyle diseases.

Foods rich in cholesterol with a modest amount of saturated fats are allowed in moderation:

- Eggs and shellfish.
- It is OK to eat 2 eggs and 1 portion of shellfish per week.

3 grams of fibre per day in form of oats can lower cholesterol. Margarines like Benecol and Flora Pro.Active, has shown to lower cholesterol level by 10 % when used

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Lose weight if your weight has increased.
- Be aware of that alcohol has a lots of calories.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables – at least 5 portions a day.
- Limit red meat, eat more chicken and fish.
- Use margarines like benecol or flora pro.active, olive oil or one high in polyunsaturates.
- Use skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.
- Avoid Lard; use olive oil or an oil that is high in polyunsaturated fats for cooking fx cornflower, sunflower or soya oil.
- Include wholemeal bread, cereals, pasta and rice in your diet.
- Cut down on all animal fats – they are high in saturated fats.
- Animal and vegetable proteins have little effect on cholesterol levels.
- You are allowed treats occasionally

EXERCISE

The greatest benefit comes from moderate activities:

- Brisk walking
- Dancing
- Heavy gardening

The extra gain from vigorous or prolonged exercise regimes is small.

The protective effect exercise has on your cholesterol is lost if you stop exercising.