

BLOCK & NATION, P.A. FAMILY PRACTICE

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DECREASING FAT AND CHOLESTEROL IN YOUR DIET

Why?

Why should you trim the amount of fat in the food you eat? Why switch to a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet? The answer is simple: Lowering dietary fat can lower your risk of having a heart attack!

The connection between fat in the diet and heart attack is cholesterol--a fat-like substance produced by the liver and found in many animal products. Too much cholesterol is a cause of heart attacks because it can block the arteries that deliver blood to the heart.

A family history of heart disease, a diet high in saturated fat and cholesterol, smoking, lack of exercise, and obesity can all contribute to your risk of hardening of the arteries. Beware: Saturated fats are converted to cholesterol and may raise your blood cholesterol level as much as or even more than products containing cholesterol. You may feel fine, even if you have a high cholesterol level or other risk factors. In fact, for many people, a heart attack is the first sign of trouble.

Fortunately, many Americans can lower their blood cholesterol to an acceptable level by changing their diets. By following a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet, you can help control your blood cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart attack.

A seven-year, government-sponsored study showed that the risk of heart disease falls 2% for every 1% elevated blood cholesterol is lowered.

Where do I begin?

The first step toward healthier eating is to study the American Heart Association's low-fat, low-cholesterol diet and, if necessary, modify your eating habits. This diet can help you maintain or achieve desirable body weight. On this diet, approximately 10% of your total calories should come from saturated fat, 10% from monounsaturated fat, and 10% from polyunsaturated fat. The following discussion will help you learn more about fat:

Cholesterol: Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found only in animal products. Because dietary cholesterol raises blood cholesterol, intake must be limited. The American Heart Association recommends an intake of no more than 300 mg/day.

Examples of high cholesterol foods: egg yolks, liver and other organ meats, shrimp, and sardines.

Saturated Fats: These fats are usually solid at room temperature. Although they are most commonly found in animal products, saturated fats also occur naturally in such vegetable products as chocolate and coconut and in vegetable products that have been converted from a polyunsaturated fat to a saturated fat through hydrogenation. It is important to read food labels carefully. Although a label may correctly say "no cholesterol", the product may contain a high level of saturated fat.

Examples of foods high in saturated fat: prime cuts of beef, lamb, pork, veal, luncheon meats, poultry skin, lard, butter, whole milk, cream, ice cream, cream sauces, cheeses made from whole milk, chocolate, coconut, coconut oil, palm oil, and hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable shortening.

Monounsaturated Fats: These fats are usually liquid at room temperature and are found primarily in vegetable products. Current research indicates that monounsaturated fats have a favorable effect on blood cholesterol levels when eaten in moderation.

Examples of foods high in monounsaturated fat: olive oil and peanut oil.

Polyunsaturated Fats: These fats are found primarily in vegetable products and are usually liquid at room temperature. When eaten in moderation, polyunsaturated fats have a cholesterol-lowering effect.

Examples of foods high in polyunsaturated fat: safflower, sunflower, corn, soybean and cottonseed oils, and margarines made from liquid vegetable oils.

Train yourself to think "low Fat" in your food selections and cooking methods. Eat more poultry and fish and less red meat. Eat less fried food, "fast food", and commercially baked goods. Bake, broil, and steam your food, and be sure to skim the fat off gravies and soups. Add flavor with herbs and spices, and learn to enjoy healthy, wholesome fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Organize your shopping around low-fat, low-cholesterol menus. Advance preparation and careful shopping can help you avoid foods that are high in fat.

Prepare your palate for wholesome eating in the years to come. A low-fat, low-cholesterol diet is a lifetime plan for healthy eating and healthy living.

TIPS FOR DINING OUT

Many people who follow their diets at home resume unhealthy habits when dining out. By following these tips, you can easily adhere to your regimen:

- Avoid foods that have been fried in deep fat
- Be polite but assertive when ordering meals. If asked, many restaurants will prepare foods as you request- broiled instead of fried, for example.
- Have sauces and salad dressings served on the side. This will let you limit the size of portions.
- Choose restaurants that serve such healthful entrees as baked or broiled chicken and fish.
- Oriental restaurants can be good choices. Order dishes that feature small portions of chicken, fish, or lean meat stir fried with vegetables in small amounts of peanut oil.
- Italian restaurants can also be wise choices. Pasta with tomato sauce is a filling, low -fat meal. Avoid high-fat cheeses, sausages, and fatty cuts of meat.
- At delicatessens, choose a sliced turkey or lean roast beef sandwich rather than high-fat sandwich meats and cheese. Choose cole slaw, sliced tomatoes, or a dill pickle spear instead of fries or chips.
- Even at fast-food restaurants, you can find relatively low-fat choices. Unfortunately, their fish and chicken are usually deep-fried in very saturated fat. Try a small broiled hamburger, a roast beef sandwich, or the salad bar.
- Eat a low-fat snack before going to a party or buffet where there will be a lot of high-fat food. This will curb your appetite and help prevent overeating.
- When dining with friends, it may be difficult to refuse high-fat foods. Eat small amounts of these foods and concentrate on the low-fat foods offered. With good friends, discuss your diet in advance. Don't be surprised if your hosts are also concerned about cholesterol.
- When traveling by plane, call the airline at least 24 hours in advance and request a low-fat, low-cholesterol meal. Many airlines will honor your request.

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CHECKING YOUR DIET:

For meat and protein foods, choose:

- fish and shellfish
- chicken and turkey without skin
- ground turkey-only 15% fat
- lean, well-trimmed beef, veal, lamb, and pork, with very little marbling of meat
- small servings of meat, seafood and poultry-7 ounces or less per day
- meatless protein occasionally-dried beans, lentils, split peas, peanut butter, tofu- instead of meat portion
- only 2 egg yolks per week (including those used in baked products and mixed dishes)
- egg whites, egg substitutes

For milk, cheese, and dairy products, choose:

- 2 to 3 servings daily of a dairy product
- skim, or 1% low-fat milk only
- low-fat milk, evaporated skim milk, or nonfat dry milk powder in place of cream
- frozen yogurt, ice milk, sherbet, or sorbet instead of ice cream
- low-fat or non-fat yogurt
- low-fat cheeses-1% cottage cheese, skim-milk ricotta, skim-milk mozzarella, skim American cheese products

For breads and cereals, choose:

- plain breads, English muffins, bagels
- plain pasta, rice
- hot or cold cereal with no added fat
- low-fat snack foods, air-popped popcorn, Scandinavian flatbread, crackers, rice cakes, melba toast, pretzels
- low-fat baked goods-angel food cake, graham crackers, fruit cookies, gingersnaps fortune cookies

For fruits and vegetables, choose:

- several servings of these low-fat, high nutrition foods daily
- raw vegetables or those that are steamed, boiled, baked or stir-fried
- vegetables seasoned with herbs, lemon juice, or a small amount of margarine

For high-fat foods, choose:

- margarine or diet margarine made with liquid safflower, corn, or sunflower oil
- cooking oils high in monounsaturated fatty acids, such as olive and peanut oils, or oils high in polyunsaturates, such as safflower, sunflower corn, and soybean oils
- salad and diet dressings made without saturated oils
- nut snacks in moderation (although the fat in these foods is primarily unsaturated, they are high in total fat and calories)

limit:

- shrimp
- fried chicken, duck
- fatty ground meat
- "Prime Grade", heavily marbled cuts
- bacon, sausage, high-fat deli meats
- liver and organ meats, hot dogs

limit:

- any milk containing more than 1% fat (whole, 2%)
- cream, half & half, nondairy creamers
- ice cream, whipped cream, nondairy whipped toppings
- whole-milk yogurt, sour cream
- whole-milk cheeses-Cheddar, American, Swiss, Muenster, cream cheese, Brie

limit:

- high-fat baked foods-doughnuts, Danish pastry, croissants
- fried rice, crispy chow-mein noodles
- granolas with coconut or coconut oil
- high-fat chips, cheese crackers, butter crackers, potato chips
- high-fat cakes, cookies, pies
- cream, butter, or cheese sauces

limit:

- coconut-the only fruit high in saturated fat
- deep-fat fried vegetables
- cream sauce, cheese sauce, or butter on vegetables

limit:

- butter or margarines made with partially hydrogenated oil
- lard, meat fat, hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated solid vegetable shortening; products made with coconut or palm oil
- salad dressings made with sour cream or cheese
- chocolate-high in saturated fat

SHOPPING

- Use nutrition labels to learn how many of a food's calories come from fat. Protein and carbohydrates (sugars and starches) both have only four calories per gram. Fat contains approximately nine calories per gram. That's why high-fat foods are also high-calorie foods. Multiply the number of grams of fat by nine to find the amount of fat calories in the food. If more than about 1/3 of the calories come from fat, it is a high-fat food and should be used sparingly, if at all. For instance:

Four Crackers: 152 calories; 4 grams protein; 16 grams carbohydrate; 8 grams fat x 9 = 72 calories.
Thus, 72/152 calories (almost 50%) come from fat, making these crackers a high-fat snack.

- Examine any product claims closely. Some products claim to have "no cholesterol", but their labels show that they do contain saturated vegetable fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable shortening. Read the ingredient label to be sure you get the whole story.

Cooking and Eating Out Tips:

Be just as careful when you dine out as you are when you make your own meals!

Salad	Use light corn oil and vinegar dressings	Pasta	Use marinara, clam or tomato sauce without meat or sausage (avoid cream sauce)
Bread	Use margarine instead of butter if desired	Pizza	Choose vegetable toppings instead of cheese or meat toppings
Chicken	Eat broiled or grilled chicken; remove its skin before eating	Baked potato	Avoid toppings such as butter or sour cream
Steak	Ask the chef to trim off any excess fat before cooking	Vegetables	Eat plenty of these, but without any heavy sauce
Hamburger	Avoid cheese or mayonnaise toppings-add tomato or lettuce instead	Dessert	Sherbet and fresh fruit are excellent choices
Fish	Select broiled or poached fillets	Coffee, tea	Use skim milk or nondairy, nonfat creamer.