



Foods to lower cholesterol

Eliseeva Tatyana, editor-in-chief of the EdaPlus.info project

Tkacheva Natalya, herbalist, nutritionist

E-mail: eliseeva.t@edaplus.info, tkacheva.n@edaplus.info

Abstract. The fashion for a healthy lifestyle is growing steadily every year. More and more people are thinking about the benefits of regular physical activity and the quality of their diet. An integral part of it is the consumption of special foods that can normalize blood cholesterol levels.

Key words: food for cholesterol, recommendations, benefits, harm, beneficial properties, contraindications

Cholesterol: friend or foe?

Cholesterol is an essential substance for our body. It is present in every cell of the body due to the fact that it is produced there. Representing a special fat-like substance, cholesterol does not mix with the blood, but, thanks to it, is carried throughout the body by lipoproteins.

Moreover, we can highlight at least 5 most important functions that it performs, namely:

- ensuring the integrity and permeability of cell membranes;
- participation in metabolic processes and the production of bile acids necessary for the normal functioning of the small intestine;
- synthesis of vitamin D [1] ;
- production of sex hormones and adrenal hormones;
- improving brain function and influencing not only a person's intellectual abilities, but also his mood. [2]

Meanwhile, all of them are carried out only by “good” cholesterol, which is carried by high-density lipoproteins. Along with it, there is also low-density lipoprotein, which transports “bad” cholesterol. The same one that forms plaques on the walls of arteries and leads to the development of cardiovascular diseases and even infertility, according to recent studies by American scientists. Dr. Enrique Schisterman, who took part in the study, noted that “*couples with high cholesterol levels in both partners were unable to conceive a child longer than those couples whose cholesterol levels were within the normal range.*” It is this cholesterol that doctors recommend reducing if the permissible level is exceeded.

And according to them, it should be below 129 mg/dl. In turn, the level of “good” cholesterol should be above 40 mg/dl. Otherwise, the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases and even a heart attack increases significantly.

By the way, the ratio of “*bad*” and “*good*” cholesterol in the human body is 25% to 75%, respectively. Based on this, many argue that any, even the most strict, diet will reduce blood cholesterol levels by no more than 10%.

Diet to lower cholesterol

Doctors have developed several diet options to combat cholesterol. Meanwhile, 2 of them are considered the most popular and effective:

The first involves reducing the level of consumed saturated fats, which are found in butter, margarine, palm oil, fatty layers of meat, cheese, etc. and are the cause of the appearance of those same plaques in the vessels. Interestingly, its effectiveness, according to American scientists, is justified in only 5% of cases.

The second insists on eating foods with a low glycemic index and healthy fats. Simply put, following this diet requires replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats. The latter are found in fish, nuts and seeds. And replace carbohydrates with a high glycemic index (those that cause an increase in blood sugar) - flour, corn flakes, baked potatoes and more - with fresh vegetables, fruits and legumes. The advantage of such a diet is that it also allows you to get rid of excess weight, which, in turn, leads to a decrease in blood cholesterol levels and the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases.

Top 9 Foods to Lower Cholesterol

1. Legumes. They are an excellent source of soluble fiber, which lowers blood cholesterol levels by binding the latter to acids in the intestines, preventing it from being reabsorbed into the body. In addition to legumes, this fiber is found in oatmeal, brown rice, and many fruits and vegetables, particularly apples and carrots.
2. Salmon. It contains polyunsaturated fatty acids omega-3, which can reduce the level of “bad” cholesterol in the blood and increase the level of “good” cholesterol. In addition, salmon is a storehouse of protein, which is so necessary for normal heart function. Omega-3 acids are also found in white tuna, trout, anchovies, herring, mackerel and sardines.
3. Avocado. [3] It is a source of monounsaturated fats, which have a positive effect on heart function by lowering bad cholesterol and increasing good cholesterol. In addition, avocado contains more beta-sitosterol than any other fruit. This is a special substance that helps reduce the level of “bad” cholesterol coming from food. Currently, it is successfully synthesized and used in medicine.
4. Garlic. [4] At different times, different peoples ate garlic to protect against the otherworldly, gain additional strength and endurance, and, of course, to fight infections and germs. Several years ago, another unique property of garlic was discovered - the ability to reduce the level of “bad” cholesterol and, thereby, normalize blood pressure and prevent the formation of blood clots. Recent research has found that garlic can help prevent plaque from clogging your arteries in the early stages by simply preventing cholesterol from sticking to the artery walls.
5. Spinach. [5] Like all other green leafy vegetables, as well as egg yolks, spinach contains a huge amount of lutein. This pigment reduces the risk of developing cardiovascular disease by preventing cholesterol from attaching to artery walls and clogging them. It also protects a person from blindness.

6. Green tea. It enriches the body with antioxidants, thereby maintaining healthy blood vessels. Recent studies have shown that regular consumption of green tea helps reduce “bad” cholesterol and normalize blood pressure.
7. Nuts. Ideally, it should be a mixture of walnuts [6], cashews and almonds. Doctors say that they bring more benefits in the fight against cholesterol than any cholesterol diet. After all, they contain monounsaturated fats, copper, magnesium, vitamin E and other substances that ensure normal heart function. Regular consumption of nuts can reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases. And also maintain healthy joints.
8. Black chocolate. It contains a huge amount of antioxidants necessary to fight “bad” cholesterol. You can replace it with milk chocolate or red wine. Although they contain 3 times less antioxidants.
9. Soy. It contains special substances that can reduce cholesterol levels in the blood. In addition, this is exactly the product that can replace fatty meat, butter, cheese and other saturated fats without harm to health.

How else can you lower your cholesterol levels?

- Avoid stressful situations. Stress increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease.
- Exercise. Properly selected physical exercises are a mandatory addition to the cholesterol diet.
- Stop smoking and drinking alcohol.
- Replace fried foods with baked or grilled foods.
- Reduce your consumption of fatty meats, eggs and full-fat dairy products.

And finally, listen to the opinion of doctors who insist that the success of the fight against cholesterol largely depends on the strength of the desire to help yourself and your heart. Moreover, all this is subsequently rewarded with many years of a happy and healthy life.

Literature

1. Eliseeva, T., & Mironenko, A. (2018). Vitamin D – description, benefits and where it is found. *Journal of Healthy Eating and Dietetics*, 3 (5), 52-67. DOI: 10.59316/.vi5.26
2. Shelestun, A., & Eliseeva, T. (2021). Food for the brain – 12 products for effective work. *Journal of Healthy Eating and Dietetics*, 3 (17), 22-27. DOI : 10.59316/.vi17.116
3. Eliseeva, T., & Yampolsky, A. (2019). Avocado (lat. Persēa americana). *Journal of Healthy Eating and Dietetics*, 4 (10), 63-75. DOI: 10.59316/.vi10.58
4. Eliseeva, T., & Yampolsky, A. (2019). Garlic (Latin: Allium sativum). *Journal of Healthy Eating and Dietetics*, 1 (7), 11-22. DOI: 10.59316/.vi7.35
5. Tarantul, A., & Eliseeva, T. (2020). Spinach (lat. Spinacia oleracea). *Journal of Healthy Eating and Dietetics*, (12), 48-59. DOI: 10.59316/.vi12.74
6. Eliseeva, T., & Yampolsky, A. (2019). Walnut (lat. Jūglans régia). *Journal of Healthy Eating and Dietetics*, 4 (10), 2-14. DOI: 10.59316/.vi10.53

[The HTML version of the article](#) is available on the edaplust.info website.

Foods to lower cholesterol

Eliseeva Tatyana, editor-in-chief of the project EdaPlus.info

Tkacheva Natalia, phytotherapist, nutritionist

E-mail: eliseeva.t@edaplust.info, tkacheva.n@edaplust.info

Received 06/07/2020

Abstract: The fashion for a healthy lifestyle is steadily growing every year. More and more people are thinking about the benefits of regular physical activity and the quality of their diet. An integral part of it is the consumption of special products that can normalize the level of cholesterol in the blood.