Managing Your Cholesterol

Heart and Health
Making changes in your diet, exercise and weight will help put you on the path to better heart and overall health.

A few other tips include:

• **Limit alcohol** — Drinking too much alcohol can increase your risk of heart disease. If you do drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Men should have no more than two drinks per day and women should have no more than one. One drink is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1 ounce of 80-proof liquor.

• **Take your medication(s)** — If your doctor has prescribed medication to lower your cholesterol, it is important that you take it as it will help reduce the risk of a heart attack and stroke.

• **Check your cholesterol level** — All adults should ask for a cholesterol check at least every 5 years. Some adults may need to have levels checked more often. Talk with your doctor about how often you should have your cholesterol checked.

Exercise
Exercise can help improve your cholesterol readings. Try to exercise three or four times a week. Brisk walking, gardening, jogging and swimming are some examples. WalkingWorks® is a tool available through your Blue Cross and Blue Shield Benefit Plan. Learn more at www.fepblue.org or call toll-free 1-888-706-2583. Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Quit Tobacco Products
Quitting smoking increases your good cholesterol among other health benefits.

Sometimes, in addition to lifestyle changes, medication for cholesterol is recommended if you have very high cholesterol and a history of heart attack, stroke, diabetes or other risk factors. Ask your doctor if further treatment to lower your cholesterol is right for you.

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Important Definitions
Cholesterol is a natural substance made by your liver.

Your body needs cholesterol to make hormones and work properly. Cholesterol is found naturally in your blood and your cells, as well as in many of the foods you eat. However, a high cholesterol level can increase your risk for heart disease and lead to serious problems such as heart attacks and strokes.

Some definitions you should know:
- **LDL cholesterol** means “low-density lipoprotein.” LDL transports the cholesterol from the liver to the tissues of the body, which is why it is called “bad” cholesterol.
- **HDL cholesterol** means “high-density lipoprotein.” HDL transports cholesterol from the tissues of the body to the liver where it is removed from your body, which is why it is considered “good cholesterol.”

Triglycerides are the major form of fat stored by the body. They serve as the core structure of many types of lipids (fats). Triglycerides also enter the body from the food you eat.

Total cholesterol refers to all the types of cholesterol combined.

Controlling Cholesterol
What is a good plan to help control cholesterol?

Lifestyle changes are an important part of controlling cholesterol.

Diet
Food choices have a major impact on your cholesterol levels. Having a “heart healthy” eating plan is one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts. Below are some ways to help improve your diet:

- **Cut back on trans fats**
  - Trans fats are found in processed foods like snacks (crackers and chips) and baked goods (muffins, cookies and cakes) with hydrogenated oil or partially hydrogenated oil

- **Reduce saturated fats**
  - For a woman eating 1,800 calories a day, limit saturated fat to around 10 to 12 grams per day
  - For a man eating 2,500 calories per day, limit saturated fat to around 14 to 17 grams per day

Foods containing saturated fats include:
- Lard
- Fatback and salt pork
- High-fat meats like regular ground beef, bologna, hot dogs, sausage, bacon and spareribs
- High-fat dairy products such as full-fat cheese, cream, ice cream, whole milk, 2% milk and sour cream
- Butter
- Cream sauces
- Gravy made with meat drippings
- Chocolate
- Coconut and coconut oil
- Poultry (chicken and turkey skin)
- Palm oil and palm kernel oil

- **Eat more fiber**
  - A high-soluble fiber diet can help reduce your risk of heart disease by blocking cholesterol and fats from being absorbed into the blood. Insoluble fiber helps with colon health. Refer to this chart on food ideas to increase fiber in your diet.

- **Choose foods with sterols and stanols**
  - These help lower bad cholesterol (LDL) by working to block absorption of cholesterol from the stomach and intestines. Sterols and stanols can often be found as added ingredients in some margarines and special formulations of orange juice. They are also found naturally in fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

- Some people may benefit from limiting the amount of cholesterol they get from their diet. Ask your doctor what is right for you.

Nutritional Values

Start here to compare foods and drinks:

- Every item has a different serving size.
- The numbers below reflect one serving size.

Weight Management

If you are overweight, losing weight can help lower your bad cholesterol (LDL) and triglycerides, while increasing your good cholesterol (HDL). Be sure to read the nutrition label on foods, as it provides the calories, portion size and nutritional value per serving. The nutrition label also helps you compare foods and keep track of your daily intake of food.

Nutrition Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Calories per serving</th>
<th>Percent of Daily Values</th>
<th>Limit saturated fat to 5%-6% of your daily calories</th>
<th>Look here for Trans Fat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories 170</td>
<td>Calories from Fat 50%</td>
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<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat 15g</td>
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<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat 1g</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat 0g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate 2g</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 3g</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 % Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your needs may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.