

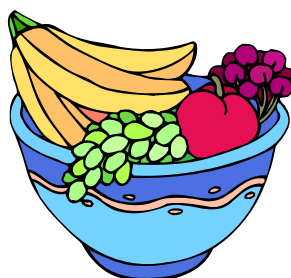


FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **CHOLESTEROL** **AND** **TRIGLYCERIDES**

- ◆ Cholesterol is a white, waxy fatty substance produced by the liver and found in the blood.
- ◆ Too much blood cholesterol can cause fatty deposits to build up inside your blood vessels making it harder for blood to flow through them. The gradual blocking of blood vessels in the heart may lead to a heart attack.
- ◆ Total blood cholesterol should be less than 4.0 mmol/l if you are at risk of heart disease or you already have the disease. You are at risk of heart disease if you are overweight, have diabetes, or if you have high blood pressure,



The main causes of high blood cholesterol are

- ◆ *Eating too much saturated fat*
- ◆ *Being overweight*
- ◆ *Family history*

This indicates that some of the causes for a high level of blood cholesterol are related to a poor diet, therefore a healthy eating plan is very important to maintain blood cholesterol within healthy range.

Dietary Strategies to reduce blood cholesterol

- ***Eat plenty of foods high in fibre:*** This includes fruits, vegetables and legumes such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and soybeans. Also select high fibre or rye bread ; rolled oats, and fortified breakfast cereals such as guardian®, health wise for the heart®, etc.
- ***Reduce intake of saturated fats:*** This can be achieved by eating low fat dairy products, lean meat, skinless chicken, avoiding the use butter, lard, cakes, fried take-away foods, Spanish chorizos, sausages, cream.
- ***Include some mono and poly unsaturated fats in your diet:*** Use oils such olive and canola when cooking, sunflower oil for salads, margarine or avocado as spread and nuts and seeds (unsalted) as snacks.
- ***Reduce intake of foods high in cholesterol:*** Limit your intake of eggs to no more than 2 per week; limit your intake of shellfish such as calamari, octopus and prawns to no more than 1 serve per; avoid offal.

If you eat margarine, use margarine with plant sterols in it. Eg Logical® proactive® and Smart balance®. See your Dietitian for advise how to use this type of margarines adequately.

Plant sterols are natural components of plants. They have a structure very similar to cholesterol; therefore they can "compete" with cholesterol in the intestine, which can help to reduce blood cholesterol.



Triglycerides

Triglycerides are another type of fat found in the blood stream. When dietary fat is digested it forms triglycerides, which are absorbed into the blood.

A high blood triglyceride level increases the risk of blood clots (thrombosis) and may lead to a reduction in 'good' (HDL) cholesterol, which is a negative effect.

Dietary factors that increase triglycerides -



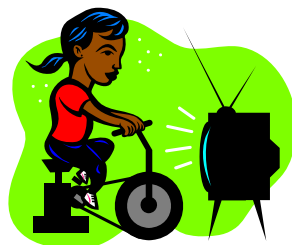
- ☹ High alcohol intake
- ☹ High fat intake (especially saturated fats)
- ☹ High intake of "simple" sugars eg soft drinks, cordials, lollies etc.

Strategies to reduce triglycerides -

- ☺ Consume more omega 3 fats, eg try to have two to three fishmeals per week.
- ☺ Avoid alcohol
- ☺ If overweight, losing weight will help to lower your triglycerides
- ☺ If you have diabetes, try to maintain the blood sugars within normal range
- ☺ Include foods with a low glycemic index eg: legumes, multigrain bread and cereals, rolled oats, apples, pears, etc. Ask your Dietitian if you want more information on low glycemic Index foods.

Last but no the least: Exercise daily!

- ◆ ***Regular exercise is very important to keep you healthy and reduce your "bad" cholesterol and triglycerides.***
- ◆ ***Any form of exercise is beneficial. Choose an exercise that you enjoy!!!***



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