

Healthy Habits

Tips for reaching and maintaining your optimum state of health

It's National Cholesterol Month

"Know Your Cholesterol Numbers, Know Your Risk."

September is National Cholesterol Education Month, the perfect opportunity to help educate you about cholesterol.

One in five people have high cholesterol. You may have high cholesterol whether you're young, old, active or thin. It's a major risk factor for heart disease, the No. 1 killer of Americans. So it's important to know your cholesterol numbers and keep them down. Here are a few tips to help you lower your cholesterol:

- ✓ Don't smoke.
- ✓ Eat five or more fruits and vegetables every day.
- ✓ Increase your physical activity to a total of 30 minutes a day, no less than 10 minute increments, most days of the week.
- ✓ Eat less foods that contain cholesterol. Cholesterol is found in foods made from animal products.
- ✓ Eat less fat. Your daily intake of fat should be less than 30% of your daily calories. Your saturated fat intake should be less than 10% of your daily calories. Sources of saturated fat in foods include the following: shortening; animal products such as cheese, cream, butter, milk, and meats; and some vegetable oils - coconut, palm, and palm kernel.
- ✓ When cooking, choose liquid vegetable oils that are high in unsaturated fats such as soybean, corn, canola, safflower, olive, or sunflower oils instead of saturated fats. Read food labels to see how much cholesterol and fat is in each serving.
- ✓ Maintain normal body weight. See your doctor for normal ranges.
- ✓ Eat no more than 3-4 egg yolks per week.

- ✓ Limit organ meats; such as livers, brains, chitlins, kidneys, hearts, gizzards, and sweetbreads.
- ✓ According to the National Institutes of Health, a total blood cholesterol less than 200 is desirable, between 200-239 is borderline high, 240 and above is high. HDL cholesterol of 60 and higher is optimal and less than 40 is low.
- ✓ Learn how to read a food label. Choose foods that are low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol.

Need more information? Visit <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>.

Sources:

Sentara Healthcare's Healthy Edge and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).



THE PLAN'S COMMUNITY HEALTH AND PREVENTION DEPARTMENT OFFERS SEVERAL PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP YOU REACH YOUR OPTIMUM STATE OF HEALTH. THEY INCLUDE: EATING FOR LIFE, HEALTHY HEART AND SMOKING CESSATION. CALL 1-800-SENTARA (1-800-736-8272) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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