

# Foods and Recipes for Lowering Cholesterol

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***Many people are able to help lower cholesterol with diet and lifestyle changes. Here are some food and recipe hints that can help you get started.***

***EAT SALADS:*** spinach, lettuce, cabbage, bean, green bean, arugala, artichoke hearts, broccoli, carrot, edamame (soy), tomato, bell pepper, eggplant, zucchini or summer squash, pea, cauliflower.

Watch out for commercial salads laden with high-fat and trans-fat dressings like potato salad. Macaroni salad is not a salad in most cases, but refined flour pasta with fatty mayonnaise. Some potato salads are made with light broth, vinegar, onions (such as Metzger's Restaurant in Ann Arbor) rather than high-fat mayonnaise. Jello is not a salad ingredient and contains artificial color, flavor, sweeteners or sugar. Simple dressings of olive or walnut oil with lemon, rice or balsamic vinegars work well.

- **BEET SALAD:** Wash and cook beets (yellow or red), slip off skins, slice, add chopped scallions, walnut or olive oil, and rice wine vinegar. Serve on a bed of chopped escarole or lettuce. Very good chilled or room temperature.
- **APPLE SALAD:** Cubes of apple, diced celery, grapes, raisins, walnuts, with a dressing of crushed pineapple mixed with greek yogurt make a wonderful salad. Cubes of chicken may be added to make a chicken Waldorf salad.

***GRILL VEGETABLES:*** Peppers, mushrooms, eggplant, carrots, fennel, carrots, potatoes, cherry tomatoes, onions, zucchini and summer squash may be coated with olive oil, cooked lightly on a grill or in the oven. Can add balsamic vinegar or other flavored vinegars or olive oils. May be eaten at room temperature or kept in frig.

***MARINATE VEGETABLES:*** Cook lightly: artichoke hearts, green or wax beans, carrots, potatoes; add olive oil and balsamic vinegar, or olive oil and wine vinegar with chopped garlic, scallions, basil, oregano, turmeric, pepper.

***EAT FRESH VEGETABLES WITH DIP*** for a snack, an appetizer, lunch. Use Greek yogurt as a base. Add crushed pineapple or a bottled Italian dressing or Ranch dressing. Keep cut-up vegetables in the frig, ready to go. Dip broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, celery, carrots, zucchini in your home-made dip.

***EAT SEASONAL FOOD IN YOUR LOCALE:*** Fresh leafy greens like spinach, eaten raw in a salad, juiced, or lightly cooked with olive oil and garlic are one of the best foods you can eat. Radishes, spinach, carrots, colorful fruits and vegetables are important for many reasons. Winter squash, cabbages, potatoes can be stored. Sweet potatoes and yams are easily baked and can be eaten year round.

***FISH*** is simple to bake or lightly sauté at home. Larger fish can be cooked on a grill after brushing with oil. A fresh vegetable salsa or fruit salsa served with lightly cooked fish is a wonderful dinner. Fish sautéed with slivered almonds is delicious. Canned wild-caught salmon can be eaten from the can. Remove skin and any dark parts, place on lettuce, slice a scallion, add olive oil and balsamic vinegar, voila! LUNCH!

**SHRIMP** can be kept frozen, cooked and served in a lettuce salad with mixed vegetables. Shrimp sautéed in olive oil with vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, sliced bell peppers, or roasted red peppers, adding a favorite sauce of lemon, white wine, and a bit of butter is quick and good.

**SOUPS** with clear bases, such as chicken or vegetable stock, or pureed vegetables are best. Avoid thick, creamy soups usually made with cream and butter. Check labels on commercial soups since often they contain too much salt and other additives. Restaurant soups are sometimes so salty they are nearly inedible. Bisques may be thickened with cooked rice added to the basic ingredients and then pureed in a food processor or VitaMix. Try cauliflower, broccoli, winter squash, sweet potato, potato, tomato, bean, split pea, lentil soups. Organic commercial soups can be quite good. Organic Imagine brand is readily available in supermarkets. Add ingredients with no salt to cut the saltiness of the soups, such as: fruit juice, canned beans, soy milk, buttermilk, broths, yogurt or water and herbs. A patient used to make interesting soups by visiting farmer's market to bring home a variety of vegetables. She would then make a soup from whatever she'd bought that was fresh and full of nutrients. Homemade minestrone, white bean, and potato soups are so good!

**BAKED CHICKEN OR TURKEY** with baked sweet potato or winter squash, and a brown and wild rice stuffing containing onions, celery, spinach, and sage is a great dinner. Simply serve with a side of broccoli or green beans. Usually enough is left over for sandwiches or a second dinner. The chicken bones can be simmered in water with herbs, onion, celery to make stock. When simmered for a few hours, this stock contains the strength of the bones that helps so much with joints, bones and connective tissues.

- **TURKEY BURGERS** in whole grain buns with lettuce, tomato, and a spread using Greek yogurt plus a little mayonnaise, sage, pickle relish and onion powder mixed in.
- **MEATLOAF** can be made in large enough batches to freeze. Use 2 lb. ground turkey, 1 lb. lean ground beef (or all turkey), add 3 cups rolled oats, 4 eggs, 3 cups chopped celery, 2 cups chopped onion, 2 tbsp black pepper, 2 tsp turmeric, 3 tbsp onion powder, 2 tbsp Celtic sea salt. Saute onions and celery in 2 tbsp olive oil until very soft, 15 or 20 minutes. Mix all ingredients well. Add a little milk if too dry, or add bread crumbs or more oatmeal if too wet. Shape into loaves on oven baking dishes coated with olive oil. Top with catsup or brush with blackstrap molasses. Bake at 325 degrees until done, about 30-45 minutes. May be frozen and reheated. Be sure turkey does not have skin ground into it.

**FRUITS** are part of a cholesterol-lowering eating plan since many of them contain soluble fibers to help remove cholesterol from the digestive tract. Apples and applesauce are a staple in the diet. Oranges, grapefruit, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, figs are good choices. When not available fresh, canned without sugar or frozen are acceptable choices. A pear with cottage cheese, apple with peanut butter, plums or figs with yogurt can be breakfast or lunch. Fresh figs are delicious! Apples cut in half, cored, and baked with a little instant tapioca, maple syrup, and apple juice are a delicious dessert, especially when topped with a dollop of vanilla yogurt.

**EGGS** are a good food for most people. Cholesterol in egg yolk is a problem when it is heated in the presence of air which contains oxygen and causes cholesterol to become oxidized. So, hard or soft-boil eggs, sunny-side-up, over easy are fine when cooked at low, gentle temperatures. Scrambled eggs, powdered eggs, steam-table scrambled eggs should be avoided.

**RAW NUTS AND SEEDS** are a good snack, can be added to salads and soups, or cooked lightly with fish or a vegetable. They can be eaten every day since the oils in them are good for us. Peanuts are a legume, not a nut. Peanut oil may contain pesticides, unless it is organic. Freshly ground flaxseed daily is helpful.

**GRAINS** can help control cholesterol when they contain soluble fibers. Oatmeal is the most popular. Oats or oat bran can be cooked and eaten as a hot cereal, and this can be allowed to cool and then eaten cold with milk and berries and maple syrup. Oat bran hot cereal cooks quickly and tastes like Cream of Wheat (not recommended) Other grains that help cholesterol include brown rice, wild rice, quinoa, barley. For the most part, wheat and rye do not contain soluble fiber and are not particularly helpful when controlling cholesterol is the goal. I don't recommend corn since most of it is genetically modified and often pesticide residues are a concern.

- **Polenta substitute:** Oatmeal can even be a polenta substitute for corn. Cooked oatmeal can be mixed with chopped onion, scallion, garlic, ground hot pepper or chili seasonings, oregano or basil, placed in a pie pan and cooled. When ready to serve with Mexican food, a thin topping of mozzarella or Mexican blend grated cheese can be placed on top, the pan heated in the oven, and served as a side with beans and rice, red pepper and tomato soup, or other Mexican fare. This oat polenta is good with salsa.

**FATS AND OILS:** Don't cook at high temperatures, but use medium or low heat most of the time. Only use saturated fats like butter or coconut oil that will not take on oxygen. Olive oil, avocado oil and perhaps canola oil can be used for medium temperature cooking. Do not use corn, safflower, soy oils for cooking due to their high content of unsaturated oils that take on oxygen and thus become damaging molecules that can promote heart disease. Always use organic oils if possible.

**BEANS** are one of the best foods, since they provide good protein, soluble fiber, and no cholesterol or saturated fats. Eden brand canned beans are wonderful, since they are organic, not GMO, and already have been cooked with khombu. Black bean enchiladas; black bean soup with added chopped red peppers, and onions are delicious. Whole Food Co. has good canned beans, including their baked beans which are quite good out of the can. Garbanzo salads, three bean salads, bean soup are some ways to eat beans. Edamame, soy beans, frozen can be cooked with a little butter added, and taste like lima beans. Soy protein is good for the heart and a good replacement for meat. To de-gas beans, soak beans before cooking and throw away the soaking water; or add khombu while cooking the beans. This is a seaweed that breaks down the starches causing gas.

**ALCOHOL** in moderation is beneficial. A glass of red wine, or a drink or two per day seems to help heart health.

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