

## Have you had your cholesterol tested lately?

Most adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes are at high risk for heart disease such as heart attack and stroke. People with diabetes have an increased risk of these diseases even if their LDL-cholesterol is “normal”. They have an even higher risk if their LDL-cholesterol is elevated.

Adults with diabetes should have their cholesterol tested yearly or as indicated by your health-care provider. More frequent testing may be necessary for people taking cholesterol medications. Always discuss your cholesterol results with your doctor and other members of your health-care team.

## Have you been told that you have high cholesterol?

High cholesterol usually refers to high LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. The main goal is to lower LDL-cholesterol. Check with your health-care provider to find out if you should be on medication to accomplish this. Weight management, healthy eating and regular physical activity will also help you reach this goal. This pamphlet will help you make healthy choices.

**Diabetes management requires good blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol control.**

### Definitions

**Heart (cardiovascular) disease:** damage to the heart and blood vessels. One cause is narrowing of the blood vessels due to fat deposits on the vessel walls, which limits blood flow.

**Cholesterol:** a fat substance that is naturally present in your blood and cells. There are two main types of cholesterol: LDL and HDL.

- **LDL (low-density lipoprotein):** often called “bad” cholesterol because higher levels of LDL can increase the risk of heart disease.
- **HDL (high-density lipoprotein):** often called “good” cholesterol because higher levels of HDL can reduce the risk of heart disease.

**Triglyceride:** a form of fat that the body makes from sugar, alcohol or other food sources.



## How can I manage my cholesterol through healthy living?

In addition to taking cholesterol medications as prescribed, being at a healthy weight, having healthy eating habits and doing regular physical activity help you manage cholesterol and reduce your risk of developing heart disease.



## Main goal: Lowering LDL-cholesterol

**LDL target: less than 2.0 mmol/L or as recommended by your doctor**

**My LDL:**

### Healthy eating tips

- Choose lower-fat foods
- Limit saturated fats
- Avoid trans fats
- Limit food sources of cholesterol
- Choose high-fibre foods

To help lower LDL cholesterol, replace saturated and trans fats with small amounts of unsaturated fats such as:

- olive oil
- canola oil
- peanut oil
- nuts and seeds such as peanuts, almonds and ground flax
- soft non-hydrogenated margarine

### Make healthier choices from each of the food groups:

#### Milk & Alternatives

- Choose lower-fat milk (such as skim or 1%) and milk products (such as low-fat yogourt)
- Choose low-fat milk alternatives such as soy- or rice-based products



#### Grains & Starches

- Choose whole grains
- Choose high-fibre grains, especially those with soluble fibre (such as barley, brown rice, multigrain pasta)
- Choose low-glycemic index foods



#### Fruits

- Choose whole and unprocessed fruit for more fibre



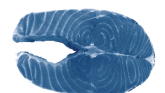
#### Vegetables

- Choose a variety of colours
- Choose high-fibre vegetables
- Choose fresh vegetables, if possible



#### Meat & Alternatives

- Choose at least two meals per week of fatty fish (such as salmon, trout, sardines)
- Choose plant protein more often (such as tofu, legumes, lentils)
- Choose lean meats, trim visible fat, remove skin from poultry
- Choose lower-fat cheese (less than 20% milk fat [MF])



## Body size

A healthy weight is assessed in many ways. Ask your health-care team about your body mass index (BMI), waist measurement and weight goals.

**FACT:** You are at a higher risk if you carry most of your weight around the abdomen.

If overweight, losing 5–10% of your current body weight through physical activity and healthy eating can help improve your cholesterol levels.

My BMI:

My target BMI:

My waist measurement:

My target waist measurement:

My current weight:

A 5–10% weight loss:

## Physical activity

Regular physical activity can help with your overall diabetes management and improve your heart health. Aim for at least 150 minutes per week (such as one 30-minute session or three 10-minute sessions a day, five days per week) and resistance exercise 2–3 times per week.

Ask your health-care team for tips on how to get started and how to maintain regular physical activity.

Ways I can get regular physical activity:

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## Read the nutrition facts

Look at the label to make healthy food choices

1		2	
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Per 90 g serving (2 slices)			
Amount		% Daily Value	
<b>Calories 170</b>			
3 <b>Fat 2.7 g</b>		<b>4 %</b>	
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g		<b>5 %</b>	
<b>Cholesterol 0 mg</b>			
<b>Sodium 200 mg</b>		<b>8 %</b>	
<b>Carbohydrate 36 g</b>		<b>13 %</b>	
4 <b>Fibre 6 g</b>		<b>24 %</b>	
Sugars 3 g			
<b>Protein 8 g</b>			
Vitamin A	1 %	Vitamin C	0 %
Calcium	2 %	Iron	16 %

### 1. Serving size

Compare the serving size on the package to the amount that you eat.

### 2. % Daily Value (% DV)

tells you if there is a little or a lot of nutrient in one serving. Compare similar products. Choose foods with a lower % DV of fat and a higher % DV of fibre.

### 3. Fat

- Choose foods with lower fat content.
- Choose foods with little or no saturated fat.
- Choose foods with no trans fat.

### 4. Fibre

- Choose foods high in fibre.
- Aim for 25 g or more of fibre per day.

Read the Ingredient List on food packages. Avoid foods containing these fats:

- Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil, shortening.
- Tropical fats such as coconut, palm or palm kernel.

## Am I doing all I can to lower my LDL?

Am I ready to do more for my heart health? I'll review my LDL-lowering goals before moving on to the next steps:

I am taking my cholesterol medication(s) as prescribed by my doctor.

Yes  No

My weight is in the healthy range.

Yes  No

My waist measurement is in the healthy range.

Yes  No

I choose low-fat foods and avoid saturated and trans fat.

Yes  No

I limit cholesterol-containing foods.

Yes  No

I make high-fibre choices (such as whole grains).

Yes  No

I eat enough vegetables and fruit servings every day.

Yes  No

I am physically active on a regular basis.

Yes  No

**If you answered YES to all the above, it means you are on the right track. If you answered NO to one or more of the goals, decide what steps you are ready to take.**

## My goals:

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If your triglyceride level is very high, your doctor may suggest you lower it with medications and healthy living habits. The following can help improve your triglyceride level:

- Limit alcohol intake
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Achieve and maintain excellent blood sugar control
- Limit added sugar and low-fibre foods such as regular pop, candy, sugar-sweetened cereals



**Related articles:** *Physical activity and diabetes, High blood pressure and diabetes, Managing weight and diabetes, Smoking and diabetes*

**DIABETES  
CANADA**

**diabetes.ca | 1-800 BANTING (226-8464) | info@diabetes.ca**

Diabetes Canada is making the invisible epidemic of diabetes visible and urgent. Eleven million Canadians have diabetes or prediabetes. Now is the time to End Diabetes - its health impacts as well as the blame, shame and misinformation associated with it. Diabetes Canada partners with Canadians to End Diabetes through education and support services, resources for health-care professionals, advocacy to governments, schools and workplaces, and, funding research to improve treatments and find a cure.

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