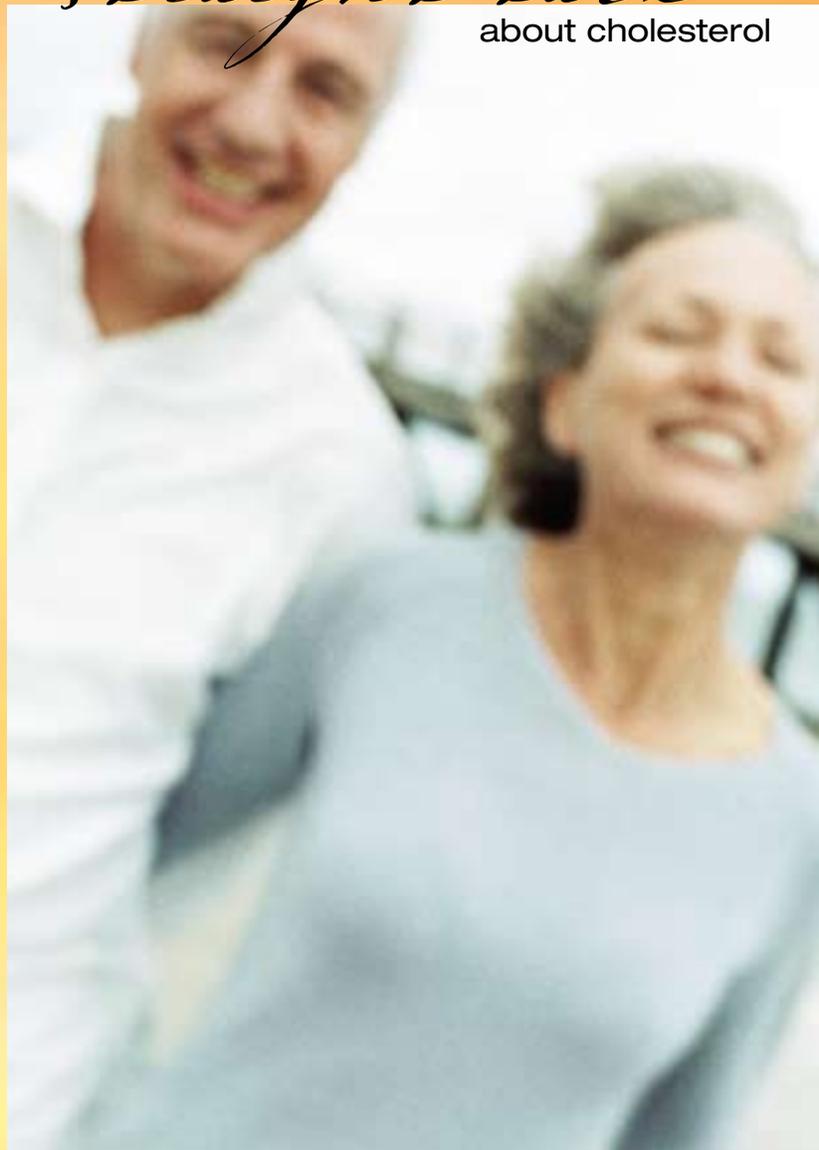


straight talk

about cholesterol



Canadian eggs are part of the Heart & Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program. Health Check™ is a national food information program developed to help consumers make healthy food choices.

*The Heart and Stroke Foundation's registered dietitians have reviewed this product to ensure it meets the specific nutrient criteria developed by the Health Check™ program based on the recommendations in *Canada's Food Guide*. A fee is paid by each participating company to help cover the cost of this voluntary, not-for-profit program. See healthcheck.org.

Developed by the Registered Dietitians at Egg Farmers of Canada.

Aussi disponible en français.

For more information visit us at www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca. For general inquiries e-mail us at contactus@livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.

healthy choices

A healthy lifestyle starts with you

Good health is all about making the right choices. If you're concerned about cholesterol and want to reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke, the best place to start is by making a few simple changes to your lifestyle.

Choosing nutritious foods more often, exercising regularly, reducing the amount of unhealthy fat in your diet – it doesn't take much to make a **BIG** difference in your health. **And it all starts with you.** So take charge of your life and start making healthy choices today. Find out what you can do to help keep your cholesterol under control.

Also visit us online at www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.



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What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a soft waxy substance produced mainly by your liver. Cholesterol is found in every cell of your body and helps to maintain your nervous system, skin, muscles, liver, intestines and heart.

What is it used for?

People often think that all cholesterol is bad for you. But cholesterol plays an important role in keeping your body healthy. It is used to build cell walls and to produce vitamin D, digestive juices and many hormones. Your body simply cannot function properly without a certain amount of cholesterol.

Types of cholesterol

There are two types of cholesterol: **blood** and **dietary** cholesterol.

Blood cholesterol is produced by your liver and makes up 80% of the cholesterol circulating in your bloodstream. The other 20% is absorbed from the foods you eat. There are two types of blood cholesterol: HDL (“**good**”) cholesterol and LDL (“**bad**”) cholesterol.

Dietary cholesterol is found mainly in foods of animal origin, such as red meat, poultry, dairy products, egg yolks and certain types of shellfish.¹

Did you know?

Your body performs a delicate balancing act to keep your blood cholesterol at a healthy level. If you eat foods high in cholesterol, your body naturally compensates by reducing the amount of cholesterol produced by your liver. If you don't get much cholesterol from your diet, then your liver increases cholesterol production to meet your body's needs.

Is cholesterol a health concern?

Cholesterol is not a health concern if you maintain healthy blood cholesterol levels. However, too much cholesterol (LDL, triglycerides) in your bloodstream has been linked to serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Good and bad cholesterol

Cholesterol travels through the bloodstream attached to certain proteins. This combination of cholesterol and protein is called a lipoprotein. When you hear people talking about “**bad**” and “**good**” cholesterol, they are usually referring to the two major types of lipoproteins:

Low-density lipoproteins or LDL cholesterol carry cholesterol from your liver to the rest of your body, where it is used for cell growth and repair.

If you have too much LDL in your bloodstream, cholesterol can build up on the walls of your arteries, forming deposits called plaque. Plaque deposits can narrow your arteries, reducing the flow of blood to your heart. This gradual narrowing and clogging of the arteries is known as atherosclerosis.

Plaque can also break off from the artery walls, forming blood clots that may cause heart attack, stroke or sudden death. Because high levels of LDL can put you at risk for heart disease and other serious illnesses, it is often referred to as “**bad**” cholesterol. Your goal should be to keep your LDL levels low.

High-density lipoproteins or HDL cholesterol remove LDL cholesterol from your arteries and carry it back to the liver, where it is eliminated as waste.

HDL is known as “**good**” cholesterol because it reduces the amount of LDL in your bloodstream and helps prevent plaque from building up in your arteries. You should keep your HDL levels high to protect your heart from disease.

What causes high blood cholesterol?

The causes of high blood cholesterol are complex. Your family history, age and even your gender can put you at risk for high cholesterol. You'll find more information about the risk factors for high cholesterol on page 11 or by visiting www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.

You don't have to limit dietary cholesterol

If you are healthy and eating a well-balanced diet, you don't have to limit dietary cholesterol. In fact, avoiding nutritious foods like eggs, lean meats and dairy products may actually do you more harm than good because it deprives your body of nutrients you need for good health.

Choose lower fat foods more often

Most healthy adults are able to maintain normal blood cholesterol levels simply by living a healthy lifestyle. One of the most important strategies for controlling your cholesterol levels is to reduce the amount of fat in your diet. Dietary fat such as saturated and trans fats is much more likely to increase your blood cholesterol levels than dietary cholesterol.

Did you know?

A large, long-term study showed that people who ate 6 or more eggs a week had a **lower risk of heart disease** than people who ate less than 1 egg per week.²



The fat-cholesterol connection

There is a very close connection between your cholesterol levels and the types of fat in your diet. Certain types of fat are healthy for you because they help to improve your cholesterol levels. A diet high in unhealthy fat, like saturated and trans fats, can be very harmful. These unhealthy fats raise the amount of LDL ("bad") cholesterol in your blood and increase your risk of heart disease.

Choose healthy fats more often

When it comes to fats, it's all about making the right choices. Reducing the amount of unhealthy fats in your diet and replacing it with healthier types of fat, like polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, is an important step in managing your cholesterol levels.

Why do we need fat?

You need a certain amount of fat in your diet for energy and cell growth. Fat also helps your body absorb the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. The concern, however, is that many people eat much more fat than they really need.

How much fat do you need every day?

A healthy eating pattern includes between 20% to 35% of your day's calories from fat.

- **For a woman** this means about 45 to 75 grams of fat a day
- **For a man** this means about 60 to 105 grams of fat a day

If you have heart disease, diabetes or other health conditions, you should have even less fat in your diet.

How much fat is in one large egg?

One large egg contains 5 grams of total fat. With only **1.5 g of saturated fat and no trans fat**, eggs are an excellent choice for a healthy diet.

Know your fats

The four major types of fat in the foods we eat are saturated fat, trans fat, polyunsaturated fat and monounsaturated fat. The cholesterol level in your body can be affected by the different types of fat you consume. Unhealthy fat, such as saturated and trans fats, raise LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels in your blood.

Unhealthy fats

Saturated fat

- increases LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and raises total blood cholesterol levels
- is found in fatty cuts of meat, poultry skin, lard, and whole-fat dairy products, such as butter, cheese and ice cream
- is also found in some vegetable oils including palm, palm kernel and coconut oils

Trans fat

- is more harmful than saturated fat because it raises LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, lowers HDL (“good”) cholesterol and increases triglyceride levels
- is found in all foods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, such as baked goods and processed foods (e.g. muffins, cookies, doughnuts, French fries, etc.)
- small amounts of naturally-occurring trans fat is also found in some meat and dairy products

Triglycerides

- are the most common type of fat in your body
- are a source of energy – triglyceride levels increase after eating
- high triglyceride levels are associated with excess intake of simple sugars, refined carbohydrates, saturated fat, trans fat and alcohol

The connection between triglycerides and heart disease is not clear but people with high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes often have elevated triglyceride levels.

Healthy fats

Clinical studies have shown that **replacing the unhealthy saturated and trans fats** in your diet with healthier monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats **is more effective in reducing heart disease risk** than simply reducing the total amount of fat that you eat.

Polyunsaturated fats

- reduce risk of heart disease and stroke by lowering LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- are found in corn, safflower, soybean and sunflower oils, non-hydrogenated margarines made with these oils, nuts and seeds
- also provide omega-6 and omega-3, two essential fats that your body needs for cell growth but cannot make by itself

Learn more about omega-3s and your health on page 10.

Monounsaturated fats

- lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and increase HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- are found in olive, canola and peanut oils, non-hydrogenated margarines made with these oils, avocados, nuts and seeds
- usually contain higher amounts of vitamin E, an important antioxidant

Wondering how to add more heart-healthy foods to your diet? You’ll find practical advice and suggestions in the ***Your Diet Your Decision*** booklet or by visiting www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca. And don’t forget to **try the delicious, low-fat recipes** included in this kit!



Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are healthy fats that help protect your heart by lowering the amount of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol in your blood. Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for good health but your body can’t produce them by itself. You have to get omega-3 fatty acids from the food you eat.

Common sources of omega-3 fatty acids:

- fattier fish such as salmon, trout, herring, swordfish, cod, bluefish and mackerel
- canola and soybean oils
- flaxseed
- omega-3 eggs
- nuts such as walnuts, pecans and pine nuts

What are the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids are important for good vision, brain function and normal growth and development. Clinical studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids may also help to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke by: ³

- lowering blood pressure
- reducing the risk of blood clots and blocked blood vessels
- protecting against abnormal heart rhythms that can cause sudden death
- preventing hardening of the arteries

People of all ages should include omega-3 fatty acids in their diet every day.

*The recommended amounts for adults aged 19 and over are:*⁴

men – 1.6 grams daily

women – 1.1 grams daily

Omega-3 eggs

Omega-3 enriched eggs provide a natural, convenient, nutritious and inexpensive way to add more omega-3 fatty acids to your diet. One large omega-3 egg provides between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the recommended daily amount of omega-3 fatty acids. **Omega-3 eggs are also low in unhealthy saturated and trans fats**, which makes them an excellent addition to a well-balanced diet.

Are you at risk?

Anyone can develop high cholesterol at any age. High cholesterol comes with no warning signs and can damage your health before you even know you have it. That’s why it’s important to recognize the risk and deal with it seriously.

Your lifestyle can put you at risk

Your lifestyle has a tremendous impact on your health. If you smoke, don’t exercise and eat a high-fat diet, your risk of developing high cholesterol and heart disease increases dramatically.

Fortunately, it only takes a few lifestyle changes to improve your health and well-being. You’ll learn more about the benefits of healthy living in the **Get Active and Healthy for Life** booklet.

Common risk factors for high cholesterol

Risk factors you can’t control:

- You are a man over 40
- You are a woman over 50 or post-menopausal
- You are of First Nations, African or South Asian descent
- You have a close family member (mother, father, brother, sister) with a history of heart disease, stroke or high cholesterol
- You have had a heart attack or stroke

Risk factors you can control:

- You are overweight – Body Mass Index (BMI) over 25 or waist circumference more than 102 cm/40 inches (men) or 88 cm/35 inches (women)
- You are physically inactive – less than 20 minutes of vigorous exercise, 30 minutes of moderate exercise or 60 minutes of light exercise, at least 4 days a week
- You smoke or recently stopped smoking
- You eat a diet high in saturated and trans fats
- You drink excessively
- You have high levels of stress
- You have high blood pressure
- You have Type 2 diabetes

Understanding your test results

The only way to find out if your blood cholesterol levels are too high is to have your blood tested. High cholesterol has no symptoms and can develop with no warning signs. Without this simple blood test, you may not know that you have high cholesterol until your health is at risk.

A cholesterol test provides your doctor with important information about the amount and types of fat in your blood.

What the test measures	What it tells your doctor
Total cholesterol	The total amount of all types of cholesterol in your blood.
Low density lipoprotein (LDL)	The amount of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol in your blood.
High density lipoprotein (HDL)	The amount of HDL (“good”) cholesterol in your blood.
Total cholesterol/HDL cholesterol ratio	<p>The ratio of total cholesterol to HDL (“good”) cholesterol in your blood.</p> <p>The total cholesterol/HDL ratio is a more sensitive measurement, and is considered to be a better indicator of heart disease risk, than total cholesterol alone. A low ratio of total cholesterol to HDL is associated with a lower risk of heart disease.</p>
Triglycerides	The amount of triglycerides in your blood. High triglyceride levels are linked to low levels of HDL cholesterol and are strongly associated to heart disease, diabetes and high cholesterol.

How often should I have my cholesterol tested?

Your risk factors and cholesterol test results will determine how often you need to be tested. Regular blood tests are recommended for people who have a higher risk of developing high cholesterol.

Setting cholesterol targets

If your cholesterol levels are too high, your doctor will set targets for improvement and will monitor you regularly to see if you are meeting those targets. The good news is that most people can reach their cholesterol targets by making lifestyle changes. Some people may also need medication to control their cholesterol.

Before setting your cholesterol targets, your doctor will consider a variety of factors that affect your risk of heart disease and stroke, including your age, gender, weight and lifestyle. Your goal should be to keep your LDL levels low and your HDL levels high.

Understanding the numbers

In Canada, cholesterol measurements are given in millimoles per litre, which is abbreviated as: mmol/L. The new Canadian guidelines for lipid treatment and management⁵ recommend the following cholesterol targets:

If your risk of heart disease* is:	your LDL cholesterol target should be: AND	your total cholesterol/HDL cholesterol ratio target** should be:
High (20% or higher)	less than 2.0 mmol/L AND	less than 4.0
Moderate (11-19%)	less than 3.5 mmol/L AND	less than 5.0
Low (10% or lower)	less than 5.0 mmol/L AND	less than 6.0

* based on your risk factors
 ** because this is a ratio, there is no unit of measurement

Triglycerides – The Canadian guidelines do not provide specific triglyceride levels for each risk category but recommend 1.7 mmol/L as the preferred triglyceride target for most people.

The United States uses a different system of cholesterol measurement. Learn how to convert American measurements to Canadian by visiting www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.

Questions to ask your doctor about your cholesterol test results

- What do my cholesterol levels mean?
- What are my cholesterol targets?
- How often should I have my cholesterol levels tested?
- What do I have to do to reach my cholesterol targets?
- How does exercise affect my cholesterol levels?
- How much physical activity do I need each week?
- How does my diet affect my cholesterol levels?
- What foods should I eat, limit and/or avoid?
- Do I need to lose weight? If so, how much should I lose?
- How does smoking affect my cholesterol levels?
- How does alcohol affect my cholesterol levels?
- Can I be referred to a dietitian for dietary counselling?

Managing your cholesterol

Lowering your blood cholesterol levels can dramatically reduce your risk of serious illnesses like heart attack and stroke. In fact, **lowering your cholesterol levels is one of the most important steps you can take in protecting your long-term health.**

Everyone is unique, so finding the best way to manage your cholesterol levels will depend on many factors, including your age, weight, gender and your risk of developing heart disease. For most people, making lifestyle changes is a good place to start.

A healthy diet lowers cholesterol levels

Adopting healthier eating habits is one of the keys to effective cholesterol management. To keep your cholesterol in check, experts recommend that you eat a nutritious, balanced diet that's low in unhealthy saturated and trans fats and high in vegetables, fruit, fibre and healthy unsaturated fats, including omega-3 fatty acids.⁵



Eggs and a healthy diet

Eggs have always been an excellent choice for a healthy diet. They're low in saturated fat, contain only 70 calories and have no trans fat.

An egg a day is ok

More importantly, new scientific research confirms that the dietary cholesterol in eggs has very little effect on blood cholesterol levels in healthy adults.⁶ Major clinical studies have shown that **there is no relationship between egg consumption and an increased risk of heart disease or stroke.**^{2,6} Experts now agree that most people can eat up to one egg a day without increasing their heart disease risk.^{2,*}

* An egg a day may not be appropriate for people who have diabetes or are genetically more sensitive to dietary cholesterol. These people should consult with a registered dietitian for nutritional counselling.

What the studies tell us

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health found that **healthy adults who ate up to 1 egg a day (7 eggs a week) had little or no increased risk of heart disease.** The study monitored the diets and health outcomes of more than 100,000 men and women for up to 14 years.⁶

Another significant 20-year study also confirmed that eating more than 7 eggs a week did not increase the risk of stroke or heart disease in healthy adults.²

Eggs – a natural part of a healthy diet

Eggs play an important role in a well-balanced, heart-healthy diet. According to *Canada's Food Guide*, two eggs are considered a serving of the Meat and Alternatives food group.⁷

If healthy eating is important to you, it's good to know that Canadian eggs meet all the criteria of the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program.

Get the facts about eggs and cholesterol at www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.

Take control of your cholesterol today!

Lowering your blood cholesterol levels is one of the most important steps you can take in protecting your long-term health. For most people, making some lifestyle changes is a good place to start.

Eat less unhealthy fat – Unhealthy saturated and trans fats put your heart health at risk by lowering your HDL (“good”) cholesterol and raising your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

Choose healthy fats more often – Replacing saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats is one of the most effective ways to lower your blood cholesterol levels.

Add omega-3 fatty acids to your diet – Omega-3 fatty acids help to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Eat more fibre – The soluble fibre in whole grain foods can help reduce blood cholesterol levels^{8,9}, especially in people with high cholesterol.

Be more active – Engaging in physical activity most days of the week will decrease your risk of heart attack and stroke by 50%.

Maintain a healthy weight – Being overweight lowers your HDL cholesterol, increases your LDL and triglyceride levels and puts you at risk for serious health problems.

Stop smoking – Stopping smoking can reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke by as much as 36%.⁸

Want to know more? Browse through the **Healthy Choices** kit or visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca for delicious recipes and practical information on active living and healthy food choices.

your diet

your decision



Canadian eggs are part of the Heart & Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program. Health Check™ is a national food information program developed to help consumers make healthy food choices.

*The Heart and Stroke Foundation's registered dietitians have reviewed this product to ensure it meets the specific nutrient criteria developed by the Health Check™ program based on the recommendations in Canada's Food Guide. A fee is paid by each participating company to help cover the cost of this voluntary, not-for-profit program. See healthcheck.org.

Developed by the Registered Dietitians at Egg Farmers of Canada.

Aussi disponible en français.

For more information visit us at www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca. For general inquiries e-mail us at contactus@livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.

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Control cholesterol with a healthy diet

Making healthy diet choices is one of the first lines of defense against high cholesterol. Some foods, especially those high in saturated and trans fats, can significantly increase your cholesterol levels. Other foods deliver important health benefits that can help keep your cholesterol under control.

To get the best results, you should eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of nutritious foods such as dairy products, grains, lean meats and eggs. Your diet should also be high in vegetables and fruit, and low in unhealthy fats. **Canada's Food Guide** is an excellent resource that provides helpful guidelines for healthy food choices and you'll find a copy of it in this kit.

When you combine a healthy diet with physical activity, weight loss and the decision to stop smoking, you're taking the right steps to reduce your risk of serious health problems. All it takes is a few lifestyle changes to protect your long-term health and improve your quality of life!

Learn more about active living

Wondering how to make healthy living a part of your busy day? Learn more about fitness, healthy weight loss and the benefits of not smoking in the **Get Active and Healthy for Life** booklet.

Visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca for helpful advice you can use every day.



Eat less unhealthy fat

Unhealthy saturated and trans fats have a dangerous effect on your blood cholesterol and can jeopardize your heart health. These fats lower your HDL (“good”) cholesterol and increase your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglyceride levels. This harmful combination significantly increases your risk of heart attack and stroke.

A strong link between fat and cholesterol

According to a report by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, there is a strong connection between fat and cholesterol. Every time you increase the trans fatty acids in your diet, your good cholesterol goes down by the same amount. And **increasing the saturated fatty acids in your diet just 1% raises your bad cholesterol levels by twice as much!** These compelling figures show how easily a diet high in unhealthy fats can put your health at risk.

Tips for cutting down on saturated and trans fats

- Eat fewer cookies, crackers, pastries, French fries and other processed foods.
- Choose healthy snacks such as veggies and low-fat dip, fruit, low-fat popcorn and frozen low-fat yogurt.
- Purchase leaner cuts of meat, trim visible fat from your meat and remove the skin on chicken and turkey.
- Try baking, broiling, steaming or microwaving foods instead of frying.
- Flavour your foods with herbs, spices and lemon juice instead of butter, bacon bits or high-fat sauces.

Did you know?

One large egg contains only 1.5 grams of saturated fat and has no trans fat. Canadian eggs meet all the criteria for the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program, which tells you that they're an excellent choice for a healthy diet.

Choose healthy fats more often

When it comes to choosing fats, health experts consistently recommend monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats because of their beneficial effects on your cholesterol levels and heart health. Replacing the harmful saturated and trans fats in your diet with healthier unsaturated fats helps to lower your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels and reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Omega-3 fatty acids are heart-healthy

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fat that has been linked to a decreased risk of heart disease. **Health Canada recommends that people of all ages include omega-3 fatty acids in their diet every day.**²

Omega-3 enriched eggs **contain 4 times more heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids than regular eggs.** Clinical trials have shown that the fatty acids in omega-3 eggs help manage heart disease by reducing the risk of blood clots and irregular heart rhythms.³ The omega-3 fatty acids are found only in the yolk of the egg so to fully benefit from it be sure to eat the whole egg.

Tips for increasing healthy fats

- Eat more fatty fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel.
- Add omega-3 eggs to your menu for a convenient and inexpensive source of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Replace butter, lard or shortening with apple sauce when you bake.
- Use unsaturated oils like canola, safflower, flaxseed, sunflower and olive oils in your salads and stir-frys.
- Enjoy pecans, walnuts, almonds and macadamia nuts in moderation because they’re high in calories.

Get the facts about eggs and cholesterol

Eggs play an important role in a well-balanced, heart-healthy diet. They are a naturally nutrient-dense food, which means that they are **high in vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients, but low in saturated fat and calories.** Eggs are also a rich source of protein that provides long-lasting energy for your body. Although eggs contain cholesterol, the nutritional benefits they offer outweigh any slight cholesterol concerns for most people.

An egg a day is ok

Several long-term clinical studies have shown that **healthy adults do not have to limit the number of eggs they consume.** Research has confirmed that there is no link between eating eggs and developing heart disease for most people.⁴ In fact, a study by the Harvard School of Public Health found that **healthy adults can eat up to one egg a day** without increasing their heart disease risk.^{5,6,*}

*An egg a day may not be appropriate for people who have diabetes or are genetically more sensitive to dietary cholesterol. These people should consult a registered dietitian for nutritional counselling.

How much cholesterol is in an egg?

One large egg contains 195 mg of cholesterol. All of the cholesterol in an egg is found in the yolk. That being said, the yolk also provides the majority of the vitamins and minerals found in the egg and half of the egg’s protein. If you don’t eat the yolk, you’ll miss out on many of the egg’s nutritional benefits.

Visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca to get more facts about eggs and cholesterol.

The heart-healthy benefits of fibre

There is growing evidence to show that soluble fibre effectively lowers blood cholesterol levels, especially in people with high cholesterol.^{7,8} Soluble fibre decreases the amount of dietary cholesterol, and saturated and trans fats that your body absorbs. Vegetables, fruit and whole grain foods are excellent sources of soluble fibre and should be on your menu every day. Dietitians recommend that healthy men consume about 38 g of fibre a day and healthy women about 25 g of fibre a day from a variety of sources.

High fibre diets reduce heart disease risk

A Harvard study of 40,000 male health professionals found that people who ate a high-fibre diet had a 40% lower risk of coronary heart disease than people who ate a low-fibre diet.⁷

Increase fibre slowly

Add more fibre to your diet by gradually substituting high-fibre foods for low-fibre foods. As you increase your fibre levels, remember to drink plenty of water to keep your bowels functioning normally.

Tips for adding more fibre to your diet

- Eat whole fruits instead of drinking fruit juices.
- Switch from white rice to brown rice.
- Buy whole grain bread instead of white bread.
- Snack on raw vegetables instead of chips or chocolate bars.
- Substitute legumes (dried peas, beans, lentils) for meat, two or three times a week.
- Mix bran into yogurt for a tasty, high-fibre snack.

These foods all have fibre, so enjoy them often:

Brussel sprouts, corn, parsnips, peas, raspberries, barley, dried peas, lentils and most dried beans, yams, apples, blueberries, cranberries, oranges, pears, graham crackers, oat cakes, wild rice, bran muffins, peanut butter, bulgar, flax, wheat germ.

Visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca for a full list of foods and their fibre content.

Make healthier food choices every day

Choosing fat-free* or low-fat foods** more often is one of the most important steps you can take in managing your cholesterol. Here are some suggestions to help you make healthy choices:

Instead of...	Choose...
Butter, ghee, lard or solid (hydrogenated) shortening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-hydrogenated margarines and spreads[†] • Unsaturated oils such as canola, safflower, flaxseed, sunflower and olive oils • Non-stick cooking spray • In baking, substitute unsweetened applesauce for half of the butter, shortening or oil <p>[†] Avoid stick margarine because it is higher in saturated and trans fats.</p>
High-fat snacks such as potato chips, chocolate bars, donuts, cookies, crackers	Low-fat alternatives such as air-popped popcorn, fresh veggies, fruit and dip, angel food cake topped with fruit slices or puddings made with low-fat milk
Full-fat sour cream	Fat-free or low-fat sour cream, fat-free or low-fat yogurt
Full-fat cream cheese	Low-fat cream cheese or cottage cheese pureed until smooth
Ice cream	Frozen yogurt, sorbets or ice milk
Oil-based salad dressings	Balsamic or other flavoured vinegars, lime juice, fat-free or low-fat dressings
Whole milk or 10% half and half cream	Skim milk, 1% milk or evaporated skim milk
Regular ground beef	Extra-lean ground beef, ground chicken or turkey
Bacon	Chicken bacon, turkey bacon, smoked turkey or lean prosciutto

* **Fat-free foods** contain less than 0.5 g of fat per serving.

** **Low-fat foods** contain 3 g or less of fat per serving.

Understanding food labels

The nutrition information on food labels can help you make informed choices about the food you eat. Reading food labels carefully will help you:

- compare products more easily
- understand the nutritional value of the foods you eat
- increase or decrease specific nutrients in your diet (e.g. increase omega-3 fatty acids or decrease saturated fat)
- make informed food choices that are good for your health

What does a food label tell you?

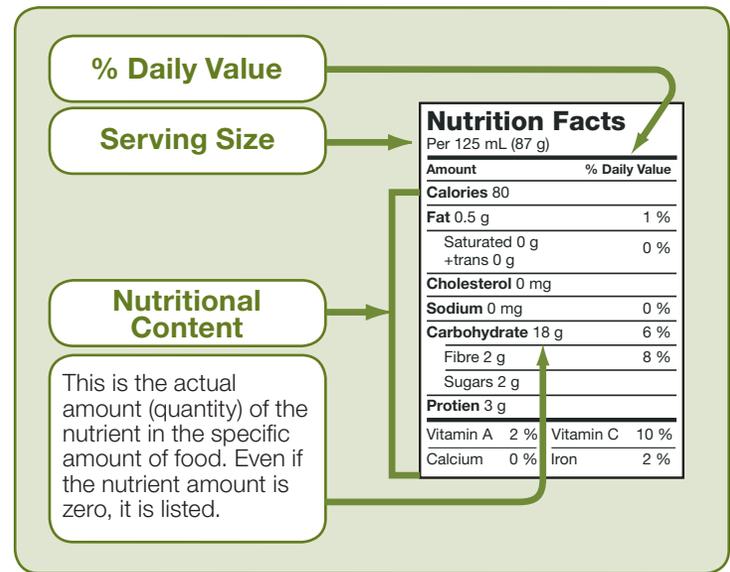
Food labels provide important information that you can use to shop wisely.

1. The Nutrition Facts table includes:

The serving size for the food product. It is usually given in measurements that you will recognize, like cups or number of pieces. Always compare the serving size on the package to the amount of food that you actually eat. Ask yourself “How many servings am I consuming?” **If you double the serving size, you double the calories and all the nutrients including fat, sugar and sodium.** Remember, the amount of food listed in the Nutrition Facts table is not a recommended serving size and is not the same as the serving sizes in *Canada’s Food Guide*.

The nutritional content of the product. It lists the number of calories and the actual amount of 13 key nutrients in each serving.

The % Daily Value for each nutrient, based on recommended amounts for a healthy diet. This tells you whether there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in one serving.



Choose foods with *less* of these ingredients (low % Daily Value):

- X Total fat, saturated fat, trans fat
- X Salt (sodium)
- X Sugar

Choose foods with *more* of these ingredients (high % Daily Value):

- ✓ Fibre
- ✓ Vitamin A and Vitamin C
- ✓ Calcium
- ✓ Iron

2. The ingredient list itemizes the ingredients used in the product by weight. The ingredient used most is listed first and the other ingredients follow in descending order. If sugar is the first item on the list, the food is high in sugar.

- 3. Nutrient content claims** draw attention to a nutrition feature of a food (e.g. “reduced in fat”). Here are some explanations of other common nutrient content claims on food labels:

Nutrient content claim	What it means*
Cholesterol-free	less than 2 mg of cholesterol, low in saturated fat, usually restricted in trans fat
Fat-free	less than 0.5 g of fat
Low-fat	3 g or less of fat
Low in saturated fat	2 g or less of saturated and trans fat combined
Free of trans fatty acids	contains less than 0.2 g of trans fatty acids
Source of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids	0.3 g or more of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids
Sodium-free	less than 5 mg of sodium
Low-calorie	40 calories or less
Calorie-reduced	at least 25% less energy than the food to which it is being compared
Source of fibre	2 g or more of fibre
Light	allowed only on foods that are reduced in fat or reduced in energy (calories)

* per serving size or reference amount.

- 4. Health claims** highlight the relationship between diet and certain health conditions (e.g. “A healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats may reduce the risk of heart disease”).

Confused about serving sizes?

Manage the portions on your plate with this quick and easy chart:

Recommended serving	Approximate size
Meat and alternatives	
• 2 ½ oz (75 g) lean meat or poultry	deck of cards
• ¾ cup (175 mL) beans or lentils	small fist
• 2 tbsp (30 mL) peanut butter	ping pong ball
<i>Canada’s Food Guide</i> considers 2 eggs a serving in Meats and Alternatives.	
Grains	
• ½ cup (125 mL) pasta or rice	tennis ball
• ½ bagel (45 g) bagel	hockey puck
• ¾ cup (175 mL) cereal	small fist or cupped hand
Milk and alternatives	
• 1 ½ oz (50 g) cheese	6 dice or 2 thumbs
• ¾ cup (175 mL) yogurt	1 small single-serve container
Vegetables and fruits	
• ½ cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen or canned vegetables	baseball
• 1 cup (250 mL) salad or leafy greens	small fist
• ¼ cup dried fruits	1 large egg
• 1 piece of fruit	tennis ball
Oils and fats	
• 1 tbsp (15 mL) oil	1 thumb

For more information on healthy food choices and serving sizes, refer to the copy of *Canada’s Food Guide* provided in this kit.

Weekly meal planning

Planning your meals ahead of time is one of the most effective ways to ensure that you meet your daily nutritional needs. This will also help you to avoid the need for fast-food which may not always be the healthiest.

Meal planning tips:

- Set aside time each week to plan your week's meal and remember to check **Canada's Food Guide** for the recommended servings you need from each of the four food groups.
- Keep a shopping list in the kitchen and update it often.
- Check the Nutrition Facts table for information on serving size, nutrient content and % Daily Value the next time you are grocery shopping.
- Cook extras. Left over meats and vegetables can be part of a quick and easy meal during the week such as fajitas, casseroles, and omelettes.
- Make an extra batch of your favourite soup or pasta for the freezer and re-heat for lunch or dinner during the week.
- Stock up on vegetables and fruits. Pre-cut and separate into single servings for a quick grab-and-go snack.
- To watch portion size plan to fill at least half your plate with vegetables and fruit, one quarter with whole grains, and one quarter with meats and alternatives.

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get active and healthy

for life



Canadian eggs are part of the Heart & Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program. Health Check™ is a national food information program developed to help consumers make healthy food choices.

[†]Enjoying a variety of foods is part of healthy eating. Eggs are a nutritious food and, like many foods, should be eaten in moderation. Canadian egg producers financially support the Health Check™ education program. This is not an endorsement. For more information, please visit www.healthcheck.org.

Developed by the Registered Dietitians at Egg Farmers of Canada.

Aussi disponible en français.

For more information visit us at www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca. To contact a dietitian or for general inquiries e-mail us at contactus@livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.

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Healthy habits lower cholesterol

It's time to start making changes in your life! You can make a BIG difference in your cholesterol levels simply by adopting a healthy lifestyle – and that's great news! The healthy habits you form today will keep you looking good and feeling better for years to come. More importantly, a healthy, active lifestyle will help you live longer and reduce your risk of developing serious health problems, like heart attack or stroke.

Take the first step

Remember that the road to success starts with the very first step. You don't have to make all your lifestyle changes at once – that can be overwhelming. Start slowly and make one small change at a time. Every healthy choice you make will bring you one step closer to controlling your cholesterol. The main lifestyle areas that you should focus on are: **physical activity, smoking and your diet.**

Be more active

Let's start with being more physically active. Fitness is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. If you aren't physically active most days of the week, you're automatically doubling your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Regular physical activity has been shown to increase HDL ("good") cholesterol levels and to help prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes and high blood pressure. Plus, you'll get the added reward of better health, increased energy and a new-found sense of vitality!

Your fitness goals

You should be physically active 4 to 7 days a week.

Aim for **at least:**

- 20 minutes of vigorous activity **or**
- 30 minutes of moderate activity **or**
- 60 minutes of light activity each day

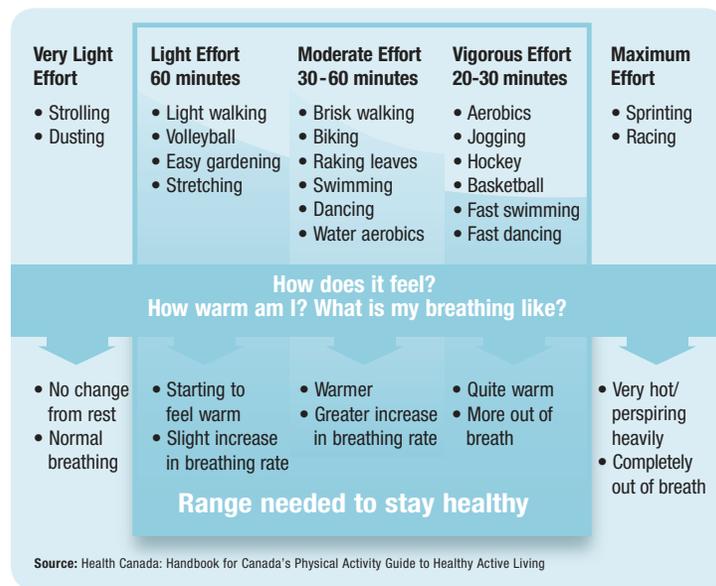
Too busy to exercise?

Like most people, you probably have a busy schedule and are just too busy to go to the gym. You don't have to follow a structured fitness program to get the health benefits of regular exercise. Research has shown that several short, 10-minute periods of physical activity, spread throughout the day, are just as good for your health as one longer exercise session.¹

Being active doesn't necessarily mean lifting weights or running on a treadmill. All it takes is a few changes in your daily routine to increase your activity levels. Go for a 10-minute walk at lunch, take the stairs instead of the elevator, go cycling with your family after work – once you start living a more active lifestyle, it won't take long before you're meeting and exceeding your daily activity targets.

The amount of time you should spend exercising depends on the effort you put in, according to the chart below:

Time vs. Effort



10 easy ways to get active today!

A busy schedule is no excuse for inactivity. Here are some quick and easy tips to add fitness to your daily routine:

1. Walk, bike or rollerblade to work.
2. If you commute to work, get off one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
3. Take the stairs instead of the elevator whenever you can.
4. Deliver messages or documents in person.
5. Try to start or end each day with some gentle yoga stretches.
6. Take a 15-minute walk at lunch or during your coffee break – fresh air and exercise are great stress relievers!
7. Running errands? Shop locally so you can walk to the stores.
8. At home, walk in place while you are watching TV. Take 10 minutes to walk up and down the stairs to get your heart rate going.
9. Work in your garden, mow the lawn, rake the leaves, shovel the snow or vacuum the house.
10. Enjoy a bike ride, swim or hike with your family – in the winter, lace up your skates.



Maintaining a healthy weight

Being overweight increases your total blood cholesterol and throws your cholesterol levels out of balance – it lowers your HDL (“good”) cholesterol and increases your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Excess weight also puts you at risk for life-threatening health problems such as heart disease and diabetes. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is an important part of an effective cholesterol management strategy.

Keep weight off for the long term

A slow and sensible approach is the best way to lose weight and keep it off – your goal should be to lose between 1 and 2 pounds a week. Remember, there are no “quick fixes” when it comes to losing weight permanently. Fad diets only promote unhealthy eating habits and may cause you to gain weight faster than ever by slowing down your metabolism.

Eggs help with weight control

If you’re trying to lose weight, start by adding eggs to your menu. Eggs are a rich source of protein that will give you long-lasting energy. The protein in eggs has been shown to decrease hunger and help with weight loss by controlling the rate that your body absorbs calories.

What the studies tell us

In a recent study, researchers found that people who ate two eggs and toast for breakfast **lost 65% more weight**, had an **83% greater reduction in waist circumference** and had **higher energy levels** than people who ate a bagel and yogurt for breakfast.²

Look for the delicious, low-fat egg recipe cards in this kit or visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca for more tips about heart-healthy eating.

Are you overweight?

Health experts now say that it's not how much you weigh but **where you carry your body weight** that affects your risk for heart attack and stroke. Fat that accumulates around your waist and abdomen is the most dangerous to your health.³ The good news is that every pound (and inch!) you lose helps reduce those risk factors and brings you one step closer to a healthier lifestyle.

Check your weight:

One of the best ways to find out if you're overweight is to measure your **waist-to-hip ratio (WHR)**. Your WHR is the circumference of your waist **divided** by the circumference of your hips.

Start by using a tape measure to measure your natural waist where it is the smallest, usually at or just above your belly button. Measure your hips at the widest part of your buttocks.

You are considered to be overweight and at greater risk of heart disease and stroke if:

- **you're a woman** and have a WHR of 0.8 or a waist circumference of 88 cm (35 inches) or more
- **you're a man** and have a WHR of 1.0 or a waist circumference of 102 cm (40 inches) or more

You can also check your weight by calculating your **Body Mass Index (BMI)**. Your goal should be a BMI of less than 25. The calculation for BMI is weight (kg)/height (m²). Visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca for an easy-to-use BMI calculator.

Time to stop smoking

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. It may not be easy, but if you have a plan, take it one day at a time and stay focused, you will achieve your goal.

If you decide to quit smoking you can reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke by as much as 36%⁴ – and the health benefits start almost as soon as you take your last puff. Smoking lowers your HDL cholesterol and damages the walls of your blood vessels, making them more susceptible to cholesterol deposits.

Don't forget that secondhand smoke can be as dangerous to your health as smoking, so try to avoid situations that expose you to secondhand smoke.

Tips for quitting

Here are some tips to help you succeed:

- **Set a “stop smoking” date** – and stick to it!
- **Choose a method of quitting that is right for you.**
- **Change your surroundings** – get rid of your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays in your home, car and workplace.
- **Build a support network** – ask your family and friends for support and encourage them not to smoke around you.
- **Avoid smoking “triggers”** – adjust your routines and stay away from activities that you connect with smoking.
- **Reduce stress** – use relaxation techniques to cope with the anxiety of quitting.
- **Talk to your doctor** – counselling, medical support and stop-smoking aids can be very helpful.

Cholesterol and your diet

Eating foods high in saturated and *trans* fat can raise your blood cholesterol levels more than anything else in your diet. The evidence linking saturated and *trans* fat with high blood cholesterol and heart disease risk is compelling – dietary fat is far more dangerous to your heart than dietary cholesterol.^{3,5,6}

One of the most effective ways to lower your cholesterol is to replace unhealthy fats with healthier fats in your diet and to eat more fibre-rich foods such as fresh vegetables, fruit and whole grains.

Learn more about healthy eating

You'll find all kinds of tips and practical advice for eating a balanced, nutritious diet in the ***Your Diet Your Decision*** booklet and online at www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca. Don't forget to browse through the recipe section for more delicious, low-fat meal ideas.



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