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Nutrition News for Seniors

EAT WELL

Provided by the Nutrition Division of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services

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Keeping your Cholesterol Levels in Check

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance made by the liver and found in your bloodstream. It is a part of every cell in your body, and is essential to human health. Too much cholesterol, however, may put you at risk of heart disease, the number one killer of American men and women.

There are two main types of cholesterol: LDL and HDL. LDL cholesterol is called "bad" cholesterol because it forms deposits on the artery walls, causing the formation of a hard, thick substance called plaque. Over time, plaque can accumulate in your blood vessels and block the blood flow to your heart.

High-density lipoprotein, or HDL, is called the "good" cholesterol because it takes cholesterol from tissues to the liver, which removes it from the body. A low level of HDL cholesterol increases your risk for heart disease, so the higher your HDL cholesterol, the better. You can raise your HDL cholesterol if you quit smoking, lose excess weight and become more physically active.

What should my Cholesterol levels be?

Total Blood Cholesterol Levels: Less than 200 mg/dL = Desirable

HDL Cholesterol Levels: More than 40 mg/dL for men
More than 50 mg/dL for women

LDL Cholesterol Levels: 100 to 129 mg/dL = Near or above optimal
(Less than 100 mg/dL is optimal for people with heart disease or diabetes)

How can I lower the bad cholesterol in my blood?

- Cut down on foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol. These include fatty meats, organ meats such as liver, shellfish, cheese, whole-milk dairy products, egg yolks and solid fats such as butter.
- Do moderate intensity physical activities, such as brisk walking, at least 30 minutes on most or all days for a total of at least 150 minutes each week.
- Eat more foods high in fiber. Aim for about 25 grams of fiber each day. Be sure to include a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas and legumes. Eat nuts and seeds in limited amounts.
- Lose weight, if necessary, and maintain a healthy weight.
- If you can't control your cholesterol through lifestyle changes, ask your doctor about medicines that can reduce cholesterol.

Source: www.americanheart.org

Food in Focus: Pears – Packed with Pectin!

Pears have been recognized as one of the 20 most popular fruits by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and it's easy to see why. They are an excellent source of fiber and a good source of vitamin C with only 100 calories per serving. Also, they have no sodium, fat or cholesterol.

Pears are also one of the leading fruit sources of fiber. A medium-size pear packs 6 grams of fiber, which equals almost one –quarter of the fiber you should eat every day. The skin of the pear contains the most fiber, so enjoy the skin for added flavor, texture and nutrients!

The inside part of the pear is where pectin is found. Pectin is a type of soluble fiber that binds to fatty substances in the digestive tract and promotes their elimination. This seems to help lower blood cholesterol levels. Soluble fiber also helps regulate the body's use of sugars. So, go ahead and enjoy all the good nutrition wrapped in this sweet and juicy package!

In the Kitchen:
Pocket Fruit Pies

4 – 8 inch tortillas, whole wheat
2 medium pears
¼ tsp cinnamon, ground
2 Tbsp brown sugar
1/8 tsp nutmeg, ground
2 Tbsp. skim milk

1. Warm tortillas in microwave or oven to make them easier to handle.
2. Peel and chop pears into slices or cubes.
3. Place one-quarter of the fruit on one side of each tortilla.
4. In a small bowl, stir together brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Sprinkle over fruit.
5. Roll up tortillas, starting at the end with the fruit.
6. Place tortillas on ungreased baking sheet and make small slashes in each tortilla. Brush with milk.
7. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit in oven for 8-12 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve.

Nutrition Facts per Serving: .
Calories: 250; **Total Fat:** 4 g; **Saturated Fat:** 1 g; **Cholesterol:** 0 mg; **Sodium:** 470 g; **Fiber:** 6 g; **Carbohydrates:** 47 g; **Protein:** 6 g. Serves 4.

Source: Recipe adapted from the Kansas State University Cooperative Extension.

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