

The Cholesterol Balancing Act

Cholesterol is an unsaturated waxy solid that is manufactured in the body and has important functions relative to cell membrane management. It is also known to help produce bile to digest fats and can help in metabolizing fat-soluble vitamins. Cholesterol is both made in tissue membranes and derived through the diet. This is where the basis of good and bad cholesterol comes into play. Cholesterol that is made in tissue membranes is transported by high-density lipoprotein (HDL), which delivers the cholesterol to the liver. HDL is thought to remove cholesterol from arteries and delivers it back to the liver for processing. Increased levels of HDL have also been deemed as protective against heart disease. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), on the other hand, is dietary cholesterol that is transported and carries cholesterol from the liver to tissue membranes.

This factor is not what makes LDL cholesterol bad, instead it is the amount of cholesterol in the wrong place at the wrong time. Large amounts of cholesterol and LDL in the arteries can lead to plaques that gradually damage arteries over time, which leads to heart attack, stroke, or some other type of heart and vascular diseases. Because of these reasons, cholesterol management for heart and vascular health focuses on lowering LDL cholesterol. What is often overlooked is the value of raising HDL cholesterol levels, which can improve removal of cholesterol from dangerous locations in the arteries.

The diet greatly influences health, and by addressing macro and micro nutrients, cholesterol health can be greatly reduced. Macro nutrients that affect cholesterol include fiber, protein, and fats. Micro nutrients are things such as vitamins and minerals, especially those that have potent antioxidant mechanisms, which can affect lipid peroxidation. Fiber, which has long been recommended by the American Heart association (AHA), lowers total and LDL cholesterol levels, while raising HDL levels. Although fiber is straightforward, the trick with protein is to always find a good source that does not have saturated fat and cholesterol that can negate its benefits. Although whey protein is animal-based, it has been shown to lower LDL cholesterol. However, many people have looked to soy to provide cholesterol-managing protein.

When it comes to natural products, there are a few key nutrients that can help with cholesterol management. Among these are DHA, EPA, Omega-3s and 6s, Vitamin E, Vitamin B, and Niacin. Limiting oxidative stress and lipid peroxidation are also important components of cholesterol management. Although micro nutrients give a good level of protection from oxidation, a large amount of antioxidant fighters comes from botanicals, flavonoids, and carotenoids. Some flavonoids that can help with cholesterol care include cocoa, tea, and fruit.

Citrus bioflavonoids also help with antioxidant management, especially when they are combined with vitamin E. Fruits such as pomegranate and grape seed extract help to limit LDL oxidation. Botanicals such as garlic, which contain antioxidant constituents help to lower total and LDL cholesterol while still maintaining HDL levels. Other suggestions to help maintain healthy cholesterol levels include pine bark extract as well as some types of algae.

Whether you're attempting to use just one or many of these approaches to battle cholesterol levels, there are many well-researched ways to both lower the bad and raise the good cholesterol.

About the Author

More information is available on [cholesterol balancing supplements](#) is available at VitaNet ®, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

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