

♥HEART HEALTH

Tips On Managing Cholesterol With Diet And Exercise

(NAPSA)—There's actually some good news for those at risk for heart disease. Experts say there are several risk factors for heart disease that can be controlled through a combination of behavior and diet. One of the more important of these factors is blood cholesterol.

Cholesterol can build up in our arteries and cause blood flow to be restricted. This can raise blood pressure and strain the heart; it also raises risk of developing heart attacks and strokes. Here are some tips that can help you manage your cholesterol:

Know Your Numbers

Stay on top of your health by getting your important numbers checked regularly by a doctor or a nurse.

These include blood cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, BMI (body mass index) and blood pressure.

- **Total Cholesterol**—If your total cholesterol is less than 200 mg/dL, your risk for heart attack is thought to be relatively low.

- **LDL Cholesterol**—This is your "bad" cholesterol and is one of the most important numbers for determining your risk for heart disease. The ideal level is less than 100 mg/dL.

- **HDL Cholesterol**—This is your "good" cholesterol and ideally is greater than 60 mg/dL.

- **Blood Pressure**—Blood pressure is the measure of the blood as it pushes against the arteries in your body. A desirable blood pressure is 120/80 mm Hg.

Get Moving

Another way to help manage your cholesterol is to get some



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physical activity every day to help keep your heart strong.

Regular exercise also helps to boost your levels of HDL. It can also help to maintain a healthy weight, which makes your heart's job easier while lowering stress.

Chronic stress can strain the heart, just like extra weight. Try healthy ways to vent stress, such as breathing exercises.

Diet And Cholesterol

The American Heart Association recommends a heart-healthy diet as one way to help manage your cholesterol. Such a diet includes:

- Fruits prepared with little or no added sugar, fat or salt;
- Vegetables prepared with little or no added sugar, fat or salt;
- Lean meats and poultry;
- Soy protein: soy milk or soy meat analogs;
- Fish: Preferably fish with "healthy fats," such as salmon or tuna, baked, broiled, grilled or boiled—but not fried;

- Dairy: Low-fat or fat-free milk (1 percent or skim), low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese;

- Whole grains: cereals, breads, pastas and tortillas made with whole grain, and brown rice;

- Oats, which contain soluble fiber that can help soak up some cholesterol and prevent it from being absorbed by your digestive tract. Eating foods made from oats, such as Cheerios, may help lower cholesterol.

Here is a recipe that uses Cheerios as part of a heart-healthy snack. You can pack individual servings of this snack in small containers or plastic bags for family members who are on the go.

On-the-Run Cereal Snack

Prep Time: 5 Minutes

Start to Finish: 5 Minutes

4 cups Honey Nut Cheerios® cereal

1 cup salted peanuts

1 cup raisins

1 cup chocolate chips

1. In large bowl or resealable food-storage plastic bag, stir all ingredients.

2. Store in airtight container.

14 servings (½ cup each)

1 Serving: Calories 210 (Calories from Fat 90); Total Fat 10g (Saturated Fat 3g); Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 110mg; Potassium 240mg; Total Carbohydrate 26g (Dietary Fiber 3g); Protein 5g

To learn more, visit www.mypyramid.gov, www.cheerios.com/forAdults/cholesterol/cholesterol_home.aspx and www.americanheart.org.