

Patient Information

Introduction to the TLC Diet

Because you already have heart disease or are at high risk for developing it, you should start on the TLC Diet right away. The TLC Diet is a low saturated fat, low cholesterol diet that will help to reduce your blood cholesterol level to decrease your chance of developing heart disease, future heart attacks, and other heart disease complications.

TLC Diet Guidelines -- you should eat:

- Less than 7% of the day's total calories from saturated fat.
- 25-35 percent of the day's total calories from fat.
- Less than 200 milligrams of dietary cholesterol a day.
- Limit sodium intake to 2400 milligrams a day.
- Just enough calories to achieve or maintain a healthy weight and reduce your blood cholesterol level. (Ask your doctor or registered dietitian what is a reasonable calorie level for you.)

Because the TLC Diet may include changes to your current eating plan, your doctor may refer you to a registered dietitian (RD) who can help you make these changes. An RD will teach you about the TLC Diet, help you choose foods and plan menus, monitor your progress, encourage you to stay on the TLC Diet, and help you to adjust your calorie level accordingly.

If your blood cholesterol is not lowered enough on the TLC Diet, your doctor may first intensify the TLC diet by increasing the amount of soluble fiber and/or adding cholesterol-lowering food products to your diet. These products include such items as margarines and salad dressings that contain plant sterol esters or plant stanol esters. If your LDL is still not lowered enough, your doctor may prescribe cholesterol lowering medication along with the TLC diet.

TLC Diet and You - Your Personal Eating Plan

The recommendations for cholesterol and sodium are the same for everyone on the TLC Diet, regardless of the number of calories they should eat. You should eat less than 200 milligrams of cholesterol a day and no more than 2400 milligrams of sodium a day.

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The recommendations for saturated fat and total fat are based on the percentage of calories you eat; the actual amount that you eat will vary depending on how many calories you eat. To get an estimate of the amount of calories, grams of saturated fat and fat to help you lower your blood cholesterol on the TLC Diet, visit:

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/cgi-bin/chd/step2intro.cgi>

Choose foods low in saturated fat

All foods that contain fat have different mixtures of saturated and unsaturated fats. Saturated fat raises your LDL (bad) cholesterol level more than anything else you eat. It is found in greatest amounts in foods from animals, such as fatty cuts of meat, poultry with the skin, whole-milk dairy products, and in tropical oils like coconut, palm kernel and palm oils. Most other vegetable oils are low in saturated fats. The best way to reduce your blood cholesterol level is to choose foods low in saturated fat. One way to do this is by choosing foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grain foods and low fat or non fat dairy products, which are naturally low in fat. Also, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are high in starch and fiber, which can help reduce your blood cholesterol.

Choose a diet moderate in total fat

Since many foods high in total fat are also high in saturated fat, a diet moderate in total fat may help you to eat less saturated fat. Any type of fat is a rich source of calories, so a diet moderate in fat may also help you eat fewer calories, which will help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your blood cholesterol level. Most people should aim to get 30% or less of their total daily calories from fat. In those with high triglyceride and/or low HDL levels, an intake of 30-35% fat may help avoid too high an intake of carbohydrate. This in turn may help to lower triglyceride and raise HDL levels. It is important that the total saturated fat intake stay <7%. This means when you do eat fat, you should substitute unsaturated fat for saturated fat. To lower the amount of fat in your diet, choose lowfat foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lowfat or nonfat dairy products, and moderate amounts of lean meat.

Choose foods low in cholesterol

Dietary cholesterol also can raise your blood cholesterol level, although usually not as much as saturated fat. So it is important to choose foods low in dietary cholesterol. Dietary cholesterol is found only in foods that come from animals. Many of these foods are also high in saturated fat. Foods from plant sources do not have cholesterol but can contain saturated fat. To lower the amount of cholesterol in your diet, choose plenty of

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fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lowfat or nonfat dairy products, and moderate amounts of lean meats.

A word about sodium

If you have high blood pressure as well as high blood cholesterol (and many people do), your doctor may tell you to cut down on sodium or salt. As long as you are working on getting your blood cholesterol number down, this is a good time to work on your blood pressure, too. Try to limit your sodium intake to no more than 2,400 milligrams a day. To lower the amount of sodium in your diet, choose low sodium foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lowfat or nonfat dairy products, and moderate amounts of lean meat. Add herbs and spices to your food instead of table salt which is high in sodium.

Lose weight if you are overweight

People who are overweight usually have higher blood cholesterol levels than people of desirable weight. When you cut the fat in your diet, you cut down on the richest source of calories as well as saturated fat and cholesterol. An eating pattern high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lowfat or nonfat dairy products and a moderate amount of lean meat is a good way to lose weight and improve your blood cholesterol.

Cholesterol-Lowering Medications and You

To reach an LDL-cholesterol goal of less than 100 mg/dL, you may need to take a cholesterol-lowering medicine in addition to making the life habit changes already mentioned. Heart disease patients and those at high risk for developing heart disease need to lower their LDL more than other people. As a result, medications are more often used by patients with heart disease and those at high risk than by those who do not have heart disease or who have a lower risk of developing it.

If you have an LDL level of 130 mg/dL or greater, you will generally need to take an LDL-lowering medicine. If your LDL level is 100 to 129 mg/dL, your doctor will consider all the facts of your case in deciding whether to prescribe medication for further LDL lowering or for high triglycerides and/or low HDL if they are present. If you have been hospitalized for a heart attack, your doctor will likely start you on a medication at discharge if your LDL-cholesterol is 130 mg/dL or greater. If your LDL-cholesterol is between 100 and 129 mg/dL during your hospitalization, your doctor may choose to start you on an LDL-lowering medication before you are discharged. Also, if your LDL-cholesterol is far above the goal level of less than 100 mg/dL when first measured, your

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doctor may choose to start a cholesterol-lowering medication together with diet and physical activity right from the beginning of treatment. If your doctor prescribes medicine, you also will need to:

- Follow your cholesterol-lowering diet.
- Be more physically active.
- Lose weight if overweight.
- Control all of your other heart disease risk factors, including smoking, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Taking all these steps together may lessen the amount of medicine you need or make the medicine work better--and that reduces your risk for a heart attack. The following is a description of cholesterol-lowering medicines.

- Statins
- Bile Acid Sequestrants
- Nicotinic Acid
- Fibrates

Other Drugs

- Hormone Replacement Therapy
- Combination Drug Therapy
- Other medications commonly prescribed for heart disease

Food Sources of Soluble Fiber

| Food Source | Soluble Fiber (g) | Total Fiber (g) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| CEREAL GRAINS (1/2 cup cooked) | | |
| Barley | 1 | 4 |
| Oatmeal | 1 | 2 |

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|--|-----|-----|
| Oatbran | 1 | 3 |
| SEEDS | | |
| Psyllium seeds, ground (1 Tbsp) | 5 | 6 |
| FRUIT (1 medium fruit) | | |
| Apple | 1 | 4 |
| Bananas | 1 | 3 |
| Blackberries (1/2 cup) | 1 | 4 |
| Citrus Fruit (orange, grapefruit) | 2 | 2-3 |
| Nectarines | 1 | 2 |
| Peaches | 1 | 2 |
| Pears | 2 | 4 |
| Plums | 1 | 1.5 |
| Prunes (1/4 cup) | 1.5 | 3 |
| LEGUMES (1/2 cup cooked) | | |
| Black Beans | 2 | 5.5 |
| Kidney Beans | 3 | 6 |
| Lima Beans | 3.5 | 6.5 |
| Navy Beans | 2 | 6 |
| Northern Beans | 1.5 | 5.5 |
| Pinto Beans | 2 | 7 |
| Lentils (yellow, green, orange) | 1 | 8 |
| Peas | | |
| Chick Peas | 1 | 6 |
| Black Eyed Peas | 1 | 5.5 |

Vails Family Practice

7811 Laguna Blvd., Suite 161 Elk Grove, CA 95758
9166914300 Fax: 9166914302

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| VEGETABLES (1/2 cup cooked) | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|
| Broccoli | 1 | 1.5 |
| Brussels Sprouts | 3 | 4.5 |
| Carrots | 1 | 2.5 |

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/cgi-bin/chd/step2intro.cgi>