

HDL, LDL, and Triglycerides: Diet and Exercise can improve your blood levels.

To raise HDL: H for Healthy (desirable level at or above 40mg.- 60mg. or above is even better.)

1. Exercise at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
2. If you are overweight, lose weight, especially through exercise.
3. Quit smoking and avoid second hand smoke.
4. One drink of alcohol a day may increase HDL. Unfortunately alcohol increases triglycerides.
5. Drugs, such as niacin and fibrates, boost HDL significantly, while statin drugs only raise it modestly.
6. Eat less saturated fats (those solid at room temperature) replace them with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats. (Replace butter with olive oil, eat lean cuts of meat and use low fat dairy foods)
7. Avoid trans fats.

To lower LDL: L for lethal (desirable level below 130 mg. –Below 100 mg. would be better!)

And to lower total cholesterol: (desirable level less than 200mg.)

1. Increase fruits and vegetables, especially those high in soluble fiber (such as pectin), including apples, pears, citrus fruit, berries, carrots, apricots, prunes, cabbage, sweet potatoes, and Brussels sprouts. Remember: 5 A DAY!
2. Eat 4 ounces of Legumes (such as Lima, kidney, black, and garbanzo beans) split peas, lentils, and other dried beans daily. They are very rich in soluble fiber.
3. Cholesterol-lowering margarines such as Benecol, Take Control and Smart Balance contain plant sterols which block the absorption of cholesterol.
4. Use Tub margarines to avoid trans fats and to replace butter.
5. Oats are rich in soluble fiber. 1 ½ cups of oatmeal or 3 cups of dry oat cereal are needed to have a significant effect. (Adding oat bran to foods can boost the total oat fiber)
6. Soy products, such as soy milk or tofu (about 2 cups of soy milk or 4 ounces of tofu) used to replace animal protein meals.
7. Eat nuts, especially walnuts, but do so in moderation because they are high in calories.
8. Saturated fats raise LDLs! Limit to 10% of calories. Choose fish and poultry 2-3 times per week and use beans and nuts to substitute for some protein meals. Drink non fat milk and eat low fat cheeses.
9. Avoid organ meats and limit eggs to 3-4 times weekly.
10. Avoid Trans fats.

To lower triglycerides: (desirable level below 150mg.)

1. Lose abdominal fat. Exercise is especially effective for losing visceral (belly) fat!
2. Increase olive, canola, soy and flax oils.
3. Choose omega-3 fats found in cold-water oily fish (such as salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, trout, and tuna) two times per week. Fish oil might be an option.
4. Ground flax seeds and walnuts may help.
5. Alcohol increases triglycerides. Avoid it or use it in moderation.
6. Extra calories are converted to fats and can increase triglycerides. Avoid over eating sweets and high calorie foods. Whole grains are the best carbohydrate food choices.