

# cholesterol

Everyone's heard of it, most of us have had ours checked, but what do those numbers mean?

- **LDL** is your bad cholesterol. This number should be lower than 130 mg/dl
- **HDL** is your good cholesterol. This number should be more than 50 mg/dl.
- **Triglyceride** is also a type of fat found in the bloodstream. It's needed to give energy to the cells to function. Like the bad effects of high LDL levels, high levels of triglycerides are now associated with a high risk of heart disease. This number should be less than 250 mg/dl

## What can you do to make changes in your cholesterol?

Primarily the two things affecting your cholesterol levels are diet and exercise. Try to eat monounsaturated fats instead of animal fats and tropical oils (palm and coconut), and to lower your intake of carbohydrates, especially of foods like white bread, cake and muffins.

The Mediterranean diet replaces saturated fats in the diet with monounsaturated fats. It is one of the most effective diet therapy options for improving unhealthy cholesterol. Substituting monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats for saturated fats in your diet can help lower your LDL-cholesterol levels without lowering your heart-protective HDL-cholesterol levels. These healthy fats include olive oils, peanut oil, peanuts, and peanut butter.

In a study by researchers at the University of Illinois women who followed a balanced high protein / low carb diet experienced a significant decline of overall triglycerides (fat in the blood) and a slight rise in HDL (the good cholesterol).

Combining exercise with weight loss has a number of positive benefits.

- promotes the reduction of LDL cholesterol levels
- reduces blood pressure
- reduces triglyceride levels
- raises HDL-cholesterol levels
- decreases diabetes risk

***If you have a serious cholesterol problem be sure to follow your doctors orders.***