

# Cholesterol

## How Types of Fats affect our Cholesterol Levels.

### What is Cholesterol?



Cholesterol is a waxy substance which is made in the body by the liver but is also found in some foods. It plays a vital role in how every cell works and is also needed to make Vitamin D, some hormones and bile for digestion. However, too much cholesterol in the blood can increase your risk of getting heart and circulatory diseases. - See more at: <http://heartuk.org.uk>

*You can help improve your cholesterol levels by:*

- Eating a healthier diet
- Being more physically active
- And if you are overweight by losing weight, reducing your waist circumference and then maintaining these changes.
- Adopting foods that actively lower cholesterol
- Stopping smoking

Don't expect to change your lifestyle overnight. For most of us that's just not possible. Try to identify 2 or 3 things you can do now and which you can maintain. Think how they can become a regular part of your lifestyle. Once new habits are established try making more changes. Small changes can result in a big difference to your health over time.



### How different kinds of fats in everyday foods can affect our cholesterol levels:

There are two main types of fats: Saturated fats or unsaturated fats

**Saturated fats** – these fats increase cholesterol levels and sources in food are:

- hard fats such as butter, lard, margarine and ghee.
- fatty meat, burgers, sausages, bacon and kebabs,
- dairy fats such as cream, cheese, full fat milk/yogurts
- pastries, pasties, pies, cakes, rich creamy desserts and biscuits
- Coconut oil and coconut cream

### **Unsaturated fats**

Unsaturated fats are heart healthy and help improve cholesterol levels. It is important to replace some foods high in saturated fat with foods rich in unsaturated fats. See our suggested swaps below.

- vegetable, seed and nut oils such as sunflower, safflower, rapeseed, olive, walnut and corn oil
- spreads based on these oils
- all kind of nuts
- oily fish such as herring, pilchards, mackerel, salmon and trout

In practice most foods contain a mixture of both saturated fats and unsaturated fats, but you can reduce your total intake of saturated fat by making some smart swaps. Try our suggestions below:

***Butter on bread and in sandwiches***

replace with spreads based on olive or sunflower oils

***Butter, ghee, hard margarine, lard, goose fat in cooking***

replace with modest amounts of vegetable oils and vegetable spreads

***Fatty meat, sausages, burgers and other meat products***

replace with modest portions of lean meat, chicken without skin and all kinds of fish - white and oily

***Snacks such as pastries, chocolate, cakes and biscuits***

replace with nuts, dried and fresh fruit, hummus

***Full cream milk and yoghurts***

replace with low fat milk and yoghurts

***Cheese***

replace with lower fat cheese or smaller portions of full fat varieties

***Cream soups and sauces***

replace with vegetable soups and tomato based sauces

***Frying especially using hard fat (lard, butter, ghee)***

replace with grilling, braising, boiling, poaching, casseroles. If roasting or frying use small amounts of vegetable oil, such as rapeseed, sunflower or olive oil

***Apart from reducing saturated fat and increasing unsaturated fats you could also improve your diet by:***

- Including cholesterol busting foods every day. See <http://heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-and-diet>
- Base your meals around high fibre carbohydrate foods such as wholemeal bread, potatoes, brown rice, wholemeal chapatti, wholemeal pasta or wholegrain breakfast cereals.
- Keep portions modest
- Fill up on fruit and vegetables, they are low in fat and packed with nutrients. Make the most of fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables.
- Eat three small meals a day with one or two healthy snacks in between



For More information and Advice visit:

Heart UK – The cholesterol charity website at: <http://heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-and-diet>

Cholesterol Helpline 0345 450 5988 open Monday to Friday 10am – 3pm with advice in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu available on Fridays.

Cholesterol Advice by email: [ask@heartuk.org.uk](mailto:ask@heartuk.org.uk)

Cholesterol Advice by letter: Write to HEART UK Cholesterol Helpline, 7 North Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1PE