



HDL Cholesterol: Get more of the good stuff

LiveLifeWell

Not all cholesterol is bad! You need high levels of HDL cholesterol, the “good” kind, to get rid of “bad” cholesterol in your blood that can lead to heart disease. Find out how smart eating and lifestyle habits can give you a boost.

- **Stick to the right fats.** Avoid trans and saturated fats, and replace them with mono- and polyunsaturated fats. These can be found in olive, peanut, canola, and flaxseed oils, as well as in nuts and cold-water fish like salmon.
- **Keep the blood sugar low.** Studies have found that HDL cholesterol levels go down as our blood sugar goes up. So try to get your carbohydrates from whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and opt for low- or non-fat dairy products.
- **Need niacin?** Evidence exists that niacin, or vitamin B3, can boost HDL levels. In addition to vitamin supplements, great sources of niacin include white-meat chicken, mackerel, avocados, tomatoes, carrots, and peanuts.
- **Get your heart pumping.** There are already so many benefits to getting regular exercise, and increasing the HDL cholesterol in your blood is one of them. After only 2 months, you can increase HDL levels by 5%! Try to squeeze in 20 to 30 minutes of exercise at least 3 to 4 times a week. Aerobic exercise can include walking, jogging, biking, skating, and water-aerobics.
- **Have a drink – in moderation.** Moderate amounts of alcohol, especially with meals, can raise your spirits and your HDL levels. Try to limit your consumption to at most two glasses a day, and, of course, if you don't already drink, don't start now.
- **Kick the habit.** Stop smoking now and you can increase your HDL cholesterol by up to 10%.
- **Shed some pounds.** Being overweight or obese leads to low HDL cholesterol levels. If you're already sticking to the eating and exercise tips above, you should simultaneously be decreasing your waist size and increasing your HDL levels.

How much of the “good” stuff do you need?

For every one-point increase in HDL cholesterol, there is a 3% decrease in risk of suffering a fatal heart attack! In fact, HDL cholesterol levels greater than 60 mg/dL may actually protect people from heart disease.

Knowing your health numbers is an important part of tackling your cholesterol. So take action – get your cholesterol checked, set a target, and take charge of your own well-being!

HDL (good) Cholesterol Levels			
	At Risk	Normal	Desirable
Men	<40 mg/dL	40 – 59 mg/dL	60+ mg/dL
Women	<50 mg/dL	50 – 59 mg/dL	60+ mg/dL

Abbott Offers FREE Advice to Help You!

Visit iLiveLifeWell.com to learn more about Abbott programs that can help you take control of your cholesterol. You can also talk with LiveLifeWell Registered Dietitian Christy Burkard for free, confidential, one-on-one advice about making healthy choices to lower your cholesterol. Call 847-937-5001 to schedule an appointment today!