

Almost one out of two Canadians has elevated blood cholesterol.

Many do not realize they have high cholesterol because you do not feel sick. Left untreated this condition can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. In Canada nearly 40% of deaths are associated with cardiovascular disease

Cholesterol is a natural fat substance found in the blood. The liver produces 80% of the bodies' cholesterol and is used to make cell membranes, vitamin D and hormones. There are two types of cholesterol:

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol – often called “bad” cholesterol because high levels of LDL-cholesterol in the blood promotes the build-up of plaque in the artery walls

High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol – called the “good” cholesterol because it helps carry LDL-cholesterol away from the artery walls

Triglycerides are not a type of cholesterol; however, they are a type of fat that is found in the blood. High triglycerides are linked with excess weight, excess alcohol consumption and diabetes. The risk of cardiovascular disease increases when the triglycerides level is too high especially when this is combined with a high level of LDL or a low level of HDL

A Healthy Lifestyle can have a positive impact on cholesterol Level. Choose the right type of Fat.

“Good Fats”	“Bad Fats”	“Ugly Fats”
Good Fats are found in Nuts, Seeds, Grains, and the oils that come from them, Fatty Fish like salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines and herring, avocados and olives. The good fats found in these foods can help to increase your HDL	Saturated fats come from animals products. Choose low fat dairy products, white meat over dark meat, remove the skin from chicken and turkey and avoid process meats like bacon and sausage. These measures will help to control your LDL.	Trans Fats are found in Fried Foods like French fries, chips, doughnuts, and also in Baked Goods like pastries, cookies, croissants, and cakes, etc. Look for baked goods that say “No Trans Fats” on the label. Trans Fat contributes to heart disease by lowering the HDL and increasing the LDL.

- **Increase the amount of fiber in your diet.** Soluble fiber helps to keeps cholesterol under control by removing the bile acids that digest fat, therefore reducing the amount of fat entering the blood. Soluble fiber lowers total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (the bad cholesterol) and reduces the risk of heart disease. Soluble fiber is found in oatmeal, dried beans, cauliflower, green beans, cabbage, dried peas, carrots, potatoes, strawberries, squash, apples, citrus fruits. When increasing you fiber it is important to also increase the amount of water you drink. Foods rich in fiber also slow down the absorption of sugar into the blood and therefore may have a positive impact on triglyceride levels.
- **Be active 30 minutes on most days** –Activity helps to increase the HDL, lower triglycerides and control weight.
- **Maintain or reduce your weight** – If excess weight is concentrated around the waist there is a greater risk of cardiovascular disease.
- **Do not smoke** – Quitting smoking improves the level of good cholesterol HDL. Smoking damages the lining of the blood vessel and promotes the accumulation of fat along the arterial walls, there by increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Fats in the blood	Desirable Blood Fat Levels
Total Cholesterol	Under 5.2 mmol /L
HDL Cholesterol	1.0 mmol /L or more
LDL Cholesterol	Under 3.4 mmol /L
Triglycerides	Under 1.7 mmol /L

*Conditions like diabetes and heart disease influence the desirable blood Fat levels

