

Facts about "Good" Cholesterol

- HDL cholesterol normally makes up 20%-30% of your total blood cholesterol.
- There is evidence that HDL helps protect against the accumulation of plaques (fatty deposits) in the walls of coronary arteries.
- Research suggests that a five-point drop in HDL cholesterol is linked to a 25% increase in heart disease risk.
- In prospective studies -- that is, studies that follow participants for a period of time to watch for events like heart attacks or death from heart disease -- HDL usually proves to be the lipid risk factor most linked to heart disease risk.
- HDL cholesterol levels are thought to be impacted by genetics.
- Women typically have higher HDL cholesterol levels than men. About a third of men and about a fifth of women have HDL levels below 40 mg/dL. Doctors consider levels of less than 40 mg/dL to be low.

Ways to Increase HDL Cholesterol

1. **Orange Juice.** Drinking three cups of orange juice a day increased HDL levels by 21% over three weeks, according to a small British study (at 330 calories, that's quite a nutritional commitment). This study could be highlighting an effect from high-antioxidant fruits and vegetables. Stay tuned in the years to come.
2. **Glycemic Load.** The glycemic load is basically a ranking of how much a standard serving of a particular food raises your blood sugar. And as the glycemic load in your diet goes up, HDL cholesterol appears to go down, according to a small recent study. Along these lines, the NCEP report recommends that most of our carbohydrate intake come from whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and fat-free and low-fat dairy products. These foods tend to be on the lower end of the glycemic scale.
3. **Choosing Better Fats.** Replacing saturated fats with monounsaturated fats can not only help reduce levels of "bad" cholesterol, it may also increase levels of "good" cholesterol, according to the Food & Fitness Advisor newsletter from Cornell University's Center for Women's Healthcare.
4. **Soy.** When substituted for animal-based products, soy foods may have heart health benefits. Soy products are low in saturated fats and high in unsaturated fats. Soy products are also high in fiber. An analysis found that soy protein, plus the isoflavones found in soy "raised HDL levels 3%, which could reduce coronary heart disease risk about 5%," says Mark Messina, PhD, a nationally known soy expert. Messina notes that soy also may lead to a small reduction in LDL cholesterol and triglycerides (another type of blood fat), and a possible enhancement in blood vessel function.
5. **Alcohol in Moderation.** Drinking moderate amounts of alcohol is associated with a higher level of HDL. Alcohol is also associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease in men and women.
6. **Aerobic exercise.** Moderately intense exercise of at least 30 minutes on most days of the week is the exercise prescription that can help raise your HDL, according to many health care professionals.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/heart/how-to-boost-your-good-cholesterol>



"Cholesterol is a good thing. It keeps your arteries from collapsing when you've got the weight of the world pressing down on you!"

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