

Love THAT HEALTHY heart

Heart disease is the number one killer of Canadians. Millions are at risk! For men and women, old and young, heart health should be a priority. You can prevent and/or effectively treat heart disease by visiting your physician, who can assess your risk factors. You can also achieve good cardiovascular health by maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly and eating well.

Once a year, your physician will check your blood for important indicators of heart health – cholesterol and triglycerides. Cholesterol is one of the fats in your blood. We need cholesterol in our bodies for hormone production, cell metabolism and other vital processes, but too much is not a good thing.

Two main types of cholesterol:

- Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol – often called “bad” cholesterol because high levels in the blood will cause 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, but are still a type of fat found in the blood. High triglycerides are linked with excess weight, excess alcohol consumption, sweets/carbohydrates and diabetes.



A **CHOLESTEROL RATIO** is a measure of the percentage of good cholesterol in comparison to the whole cholesterol count



Exercise

Try to achieve 150 minutes of activity per week. Walking is great, easy and inexpensive. Get a well-fitting pair of shoes and a pedometer. Your goal is 10,000 steps per day, but any amount is helpful. Track your average per day, then aim to increase. You'll be at 10,000 in no time. Get moving!

Manage Stress

Added strain and tension to your daily life can further increase your risk for heart disease. Try to stay well balanced. Seek some help if necessary.

Medication

You and your doctor may discuss the need for medication. This is usually an option if diet, exercise and lifestyle changes have not reduced your cholesterol significantly.

Heart healthy label reading – look for the following per serving:

- More than 4 g of fibre
- Less than 5 g of fat (less than 10 g fat for animal proteins)
- Zero trans fats (or very low levels)
- Less than 8 g of sugar
- Less than 200 mg of sodium (salt)
- Check portion size



AVOCADO, BEET & CHICKEN TOSTADAS Serves: 4

Nutritional content per serving:

calories 370 | protein 19 g | total fat 22 g |
carbohydrate 41 g | fibre 10 g | cholesterol 35 mg |
sodium 120 mg | potassium 25% | calcium 6% |
iron 8% | vitamin A 4% | vitamin C 35% | folate
57% | vitamin B12 10%

Avocados & beets are rich in dietary fibre, vitamins, and minerals known to provide cardiovascular benefits. For this nutritious recipe and more visit www.chicken.ca.

HOW TO HELP REDUCE YOUR CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

Diet

1. Eat a well-balanced diet by including mostly the good fats, which are known as mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Including a small amount of unsaturated fat (30 to 45 mL/day or 2-3 Tbsp) in our diet is a healthy habit. This may include canola, olive and soybean oil used in cooking, salad dressings, margarine or mayonnaise.
2. Read nutrition labels to limit foods which are high in saturated and trans fats often found in butter, hard margarines, lard, shortenings and processed foods.
3. Eat whole grain and sprouted breads, cereals, pasta and rice; the bran and the germ part of the grain have heart-healthy ingredients.
4. Soluble fibre has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels. Aim for 10-15 grams per day. Foods such as legumes, oats and ground flax seeds are high in soluble fibre.
5. Load up on colourful fruits and vegetables; they are loaded with antioxidants.
 - **Carotenoids** are responsible for the red/orange coloring found in some fruits and vegetables, such as tomato products, watermelon and pink grapefruit. Carotenoid-containing foods boost immunity and have cardiovascular benefits.
 - **Flavonoids** are another antioxidant. Flavonoid-containing foods help keep your blood thin and flowing. These include strong-flavoured foods such as garlic, onion, red wines (or red grape juice), green teas and broccoli.
 - Also included as antioxidant heart healthy foods are those containing **isoflavones**. Isoflavones come from soy products, but speak to a dietitian first about soy and risk factors.
6. For heart health benefits it is recommended to eat at least two servings of fatty fish every week. Not getting enough fish? Most health professionals will recommend an omega-3 supplement – 600 to 900 mg per day.
7. Nuts have natural plant compounds which are good for the heart; 60 mL (¼ cup) per day is suggested, such as almonds, walnuts, and pecans.