

7 Steps to Lowering Cholesterol

Step 1

Understand cholesterol



Cholesterol is a type of fat with important jobs to do in the body, like forming the walls of cells, making vitamin D, hormones, and bile which helps digest fat. But having too much cholesterol in the blood can clog up the arteries and lead to diseases of the heart and blood vessels, which can cause a heart attack or stroke, collectively known as cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Step 2

Know your numbers



The only way to know if you have healthy levels of cholesterol is to get a cholesterol test done. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to arrange this.

Cholesterol can't travel in the blood on its own, it's carried in little parcels of fats and proteins called 'lipoproteins'. There are two main types, known as LDL and HDL.

- **LDL cholesterol** is sometimes known as 'bad cholesterol' because too much can clog up your arteries.
- **HDL cholesterol** is sometimes known as 'good cholesterol' because it carries excess cholesterol to your liver to be broken down.
- Another type of blood fat called **triglyceride** should be tested, as having a higher triglyceride level can also increase your risk of CVD

Find out more at www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol/understanding-your-cholesterol-test-results-



Step 3

See where you can take action



A number of things can raise your cholesterol and triglycerides which you can change: an unhealthy diet – eating too much saturated fat and not enough fibre – alcohol, being overweight and not being physically active.

See how healthy your diet is with our Diet Quiz at www.heartuk.org.uk/quizzes/all-quizzes

Can you see where you can live a healthier lifestyle? If so, ask yourself these questions to help you prepare to make changes: What would motivate you to make changes? Is anything getting in your way? What could you do to overcome those barriers?

Other things can raise your blood fats including certain medical conditions such as an underactive thyroid, your genes, getting older, and in women the menopause.



Step 4

Start making changes to your diet



- **Swap saturated fats** (such as butter, full fat dairy and fatty meats) for healthier, **unsaturated fats** (such as olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds).
- **Swap refined carbs** (such as white bread and pasta) for **wholegrains** such as wholemeal bread and wholegrain breakfast cereals.
- Eat plenty of fibre from fruits, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses.
- Add in some foods which actively help lower cholesterol: **foods fortified with plant sterols and stanols** such as fat spreads i.e. ProActiv, certain yoghurts and mini yogurt drinks; **oats and barley; nuts and soya.**

Step 5

Get savvy with some practical diet hacks



- Start small with just one or two changes and build up from there.
- Set realistic goals, write them down, and plan how to achieve them.
- Get savvy with shopping – make meal plans, write shopping lists, and check the labels – to help you stay on track.
- Be aware of why you're eating and when – keeping a food diary can help you spot when you're eating because you're hungry or for other reasons.

Step 6

Don't forget about exercise



Being active is a major part of looking after your cholesterol levels and keeping your heart healthy. You don't have to join a gym, everyday activities such as gardening, brisk walking, and even dancing all count.

Step 7

Keep going!



Healthy eating is not about eating the perfect diet all the time – it's what you do most of the time that counts. Remember, it takes time to change habits, and rather than thinking about what you can't have, focus on the things you can.

For some people, a healthy diet and lifestyle might not be enough and you might need medication which you will need to take as prescribed – but keep going with the healthy lifestyle as this will keep you healthy in other ways too.

Lowering cholesterol, saving lives.
Together, we can make a big difference.

Find out more

You can find out more on all these steps at www.heartuk.org.uk, as well as watch the video on Understanding Your Cholesterol

watch our video on <https://www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol/animation>



ProActiv

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Providing expert support,
education and influence

Cholesterol SMART[®] Healthy Eating Guide



HEART UK
THE CHOLESTEROL CHARITY

Lowering Cholesterol, Saving Lives

www.heartuk.org.uk



Cholesterol SMART is HEART UK's step-by-step guide to help manage your cholesterol and triglyceride levels and protect your heart. It focuses on healthy fats (like vegetable oils and spreads, nuts, seeds, oily fish), more fruit, vegetables, wholegrains, and beans, and less saturated fat. Red and processed meat, tropical fats and full-fat dairy are eaten less often, with easy swaps suggested.

Your Cholesterol SMART® Shopping Essentials

Plan ahead and get inspired using our top tips below.

- ✓ **Fruit & Veg:** Aim for a rainbow of colours: fresh, frozen, canned (in juice or water), or dried.
- ✓ **Cholesterol Busters:**
 - **Nuts** (unsalted, unsweetened): All varieties including peanuts.
 - **Oats:** Oat breakfast biscuits or flakes, oat cakes, and/or **pearl barley**.
 - **Beans** (all varieties including soya), peas & lentils (fresh, frozen, or canned).
 - Foods fortified with **plant stanols or sterols**: Choose from yogurts, mini-shot drinks or spreads.
- ✓ **Healthy Fats:** Vegetable, nut or seed oils & spreads (**avoid coconut/palm**).
- ✓ **Dairy:** Low-fat or unsweetened fortified plant-based alternatives (**avoid coconut varieties**).
- ✓ **Wholegrains:** Wholemeal or seeded bread, wholewheat pasta, and brown, black or red rice.
- ✓ **Wholegrain Breakfast Cereals:** Such as porridge, bran flakes, wheat biscuits or unsweetened muesli.
- ✓ **Fish:** Including oily fish – canned, frozen or fresh!



Understanding Nutrition Labels

Visit us online for easy tips

www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart/food-labels or scan the QR code





Is Your Diet Cholesterol SMART®?

Check out how you score on our Cholesterol SMART checklist and then decide where you can improve.

Tick the boxes that apply to you	Yes	Sometimes	No
Do you have at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day ? A portion is roughly a handful.			
Do you eat wholegrain foods most days instead of refined (white) carbs? (E.g., wholemeal bread or chapatti, wholegrain breakfast cereals or oats, wholewheat pasta and brown rice).			
Do you eat three or more portions of beans or lentils every week ? One portion is 6 tbsp (½ large or 1 small can).			
Do you use rapeseed, olive, sunflower or other vegetable, nut or seed oils and spreads as your main fats for cooking, spreading and dressings? Coconut or palm fats don't count!			
Do you keep processed and fatty meat to a minimum – once a week or less ? E.g., sausages, bacon, ham, sausage rolls, pies, fatty red meat or poultry with skin.			
Do you keep your red meat intake down, three servings a week or less ? A serving is roughly the size of a deck of cards and could fit in your palm.			
Do you usually choose low fat milk and yogurt or plant-based alternatives ? Coconut doesn't count!			
Do you have fast food, take-aways or ready meals less than twice a week ?			
Do you usually choose water or unsweetened/sugar-free drinks instead of sugary drinks?			

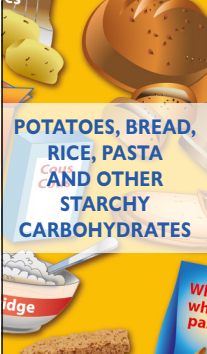
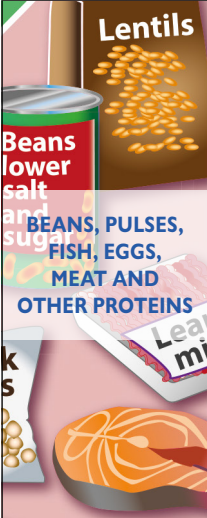
If you answered mostly **YES** - well done, carry on. Where you answered **NO** or **SOMETIMES** - these are areas you can change or improve on.

Take our full [Diet Quiz](#) online for your score, top tips and personalised advice you can save and return to any time.



Your Guide to Healthy Eating

Dietary advice to help lower your cholesterol (and triglycerides*) and help keep your heart healthy.

Food Group	Key Message	Best Choice	Occasionally	Best Avoided
 FRUIT AND VEG	Eat at least 5 or more portions everyday. Choose a wide variety.	Fresh, frozen, dried, canned fruit and vegetables ♥ Canned in natural juices and water. Vegetable based soups (without cream).	Canned fruit in syrup (drain the syrup), fruit juice.	Coleslaw, vegetables fried in batter (onion rings etc.), pakoras and samosas.
 POTATOES, BREAD, RICE, PASTA AND OTHER STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES	Eat more ♣ wholegrains and high fibre versions.	♣ Wholegrain varieties of bread, chapatti without fat, pitta bread, flour tortillas, bagel, pasta, rice, noodles. ♣ Wholegrain breakfast cereals, ♥ oats, couscous, pearl barley, bulger wheat, potatoes, sweet potatoes, yam and plantain.	Naan bread, paratha, roast potatoes, oven chips.	Garlic bread, croissants, waffles, puris, pilau, biryani and fried rice. Sugar and chocolate coated breakfast cereals. Deep fried chips, pizza with fatty meat or too much cheese.
		Breadsticks, rye crispbreads, water biscuits, plain rice cakes, fruit teacakes, crumpets, malt bread, wholemeal English muffins.	Crackers and semi-sweet biscuits (check label for lowest saturated fat content), homemade cakes and puddings (using best choice ingredients) such as carrot cake, muffins, cereal bars, fruit loaves, fruit based puddings.	Cakes, pasties, sweet pastries, pies, steamed and sponge puddings, doughnuts, filled or coated fancy biscuits, shortbread.
		Plain popcorn.	Baked crisps, low fat crisps.	Crisps, cheese snacks, cheese crackers, bombay mix.
 LENTILS BEANS, PULSES, FISH, EGGS, MEAT AND OTHER PROTEINS	Eat more beans and pulses. 2 portions of fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat, and no more than 500g cooked weight a week.	♥ Pulses including baked beans, peas, kidney beans, chick peas, lentils. Rinse if canned in salt/sugar. Reduced fat hummus.	Hummus.	
		♥ Soya products such as soya mince, soya / edamame beans, tofu, soya nuts and plain Quorn pieces, mince and fillets.	Vegetarian sausages and burgers - check the label: Choose only those that are green or amber for saturated fat and salt.	Vegetarian/vegan meat alternatives with added coconut or palm fat. Ready meals high in saturated fat. Check the labels.
		All fish and shellfish FH . Oily fish ♣ include fresh/canned mackerel, sardines, pilchards, salmon, trout and herrings.	Canned fish in oil (drain oil), fish in batter (remove batter), fish fingers, fish cakes.	Seafood in rich creamy or cheesy sauces such as Hollandaise, lobster, Marie Rose sauce.
		Eggs boiled, scrambled, poached. 3-4 a week FH .	Fried eggs and omelettes ♠.	Quiche, scotch eggs, cheese omelettes.
		♥ Nuts and nut butters (without added palm or coconut fat), all seeds (flaxseed, chia, sunflower, pumpkin, sesame etc).	Nut and seed bars.	Salted, sweetened or chocolate coated nuts, nut and seed butter with more than 10% saturated fat.
		Lean pork, extra lean mince. Kidney FH . Chicken and turkey without skin. Veal, rabbit, game, ostrich.	Small portions of lean beef, lamb, bacon, low fat sausages, low fat burgers, liver FH , coated meat, meatballs. Read labels to find lowest saturated fat versions.	Fatty cuts of meat - beef, belly pork, lamb, mutton, duck, goose. Processed meats, sausages, streaky bacon, lardons, salami, sausage rolls, pies, pasties, chicken Kiev.
 DAIRY AND ALTERNATIVES	Choose lower fat and lower sugar options.	Skimmed milk, 1% milk, buttermilk, unsweetened and fortified soya ♥ and other plant-based drinks - except coconut.	Semi-skimmed milk (2%), reduced fat evaporated milk, sweetened, fortified plain plant drinks (except coconut), and reduced fat canned coconut milk.	Full fat cows, sheeps or goats milk. Evaporated or condensed milk. All coconut milk alternatives, including full fat canned varieties.
		Low fat, low sugar yogurt or fortified and unsweetened soya, oat and nut alternatives to yogurt. Virtually fat free fromage frais. Yogurts and mini drinks with added plant sterols/stanols ♥.	Fromage Frais.	Full fat, thick and creamy yogurts. Coconut yogurt alternatives.
		Low fat and reduced fat cheese such as cottage, curd, quark, ricotta, extra light cheese spread. Soft nut vegan cheeses.	Modest portions of medium fat cheese e.g., reduced fat cheddar, edam, brie, camembert, soft goat's cheese, mozzarella, feta, paneer. Light cheese spread.	High fat cheese e.g., cream cheese, mascarpone, stilton, cheddar, gouda, parmesan, fried paneer. Full fat cheese spread. Vegan hard and semi-hard cheeses made with coconut or palm oil e.g., cheddar, Parmesan, brie style. Check the ingredients list.
 OILS AND SPREADS	Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and use in small amounts.	Olive, rapeseed, sunflower, soya, corn, nut and seed oils.		Partially hydrogenated vegetable oil on food labels. Oils that have been reheated several times. Palm, coconut, shea fats and oils.
		Spreads made from vegetable, nut or seed oils such as sunflower or olive oil. Spreads with added plant sterols/stanols ♥.		Butter, lard, suet, dripping, ghee, hard cooking fats. Vegan butter-style blocks.
 SUGARY, SALTY AND FATTY FOODS	Eat sugary, salty and fatty foods less often.	Sugar free jelly, sweeteners.	Small portions of dark chocolate, boiled sweets, gums, honey, jam, marmalade, sorbet, low fat or non-dairy ice cream.	Milk/white chocolate, fudge, toffee, sugar, treacle, syrup, Indian sweets, meringue, cheesecake, trifle, full fat dairy ice cream.
		Pepper, herbs, spices, lemon juice, garlic, chutney and pickles made with minimum oil.	Reduced salt soy sauce and stocks.	Salt, garlic salt, celery salt, soy sauce, oily pickles.
		Use lemon juice, vinegar, herbs, yogurt, olive oil for salad dressings. Thicken sauces and gravies with flour or tomato puree. Tomato based sauces and ketchup.	Salad cream and mayonnaise (use light/low calorie versions where possible), half-fat crème fraiche, oat and soya alternatives to cream (free from coconut oil - check the label).	Rich sauces made with butter, cream or full cream milk. Cream: clotted, double, whipping, soured or single. Crème fraiche. Cream alternatives made with coconut fat.
 DRINKS	6-8 cups/glasses per day.	Tap, mineral or soda water, tea, coffee with low fat milk or unsweetened plant-based drinks (except coconut), no sugar/syrup. Sugar free/diet squashes and fizzy drinks.	Fruit juice and smoothies - no more than 150ml per day. Alcohol ☹.	Where sugar or syrup is added: squash, fizzy drinks, flavoured waters, energy drinks, hot drinks. Drinks using coconut milk alternatives.

Labelling	Nutrient	Low	Medium	High	
				per 100g (per 100ml)	per serving* food (drinks)
Per 100g of food (per 100ml of drink)	Total Fat	3g or less (1.5g or less)	3g-17.5g (1.5g-8.75g)	More than 17.5g (more than 8.75g)	More than 21g (more than 10.5g)
	Saturates	1.5g or less (0.75g or less)	1.5g-5g (0.75g-2.5g)	More than 5g (more than 2.5g)	More than 6g (more than 3g)
	Total Sugars	5g or less (2.5g or less)	5g-22.5g (2.5g-11.25g)	More than 22.5g (more than 11.25g)	More than 27g (more than 13.5g)
	Salt	0.3g or less (0.3g or less)	0.3g-1.5g (0.3g- 0.75g)	More than 1.5g (more than 0.75g)	More than 1.8g (more than 0.9g)
ADULT'S DAILY REFERENCE INTAKE – Total Fat: less than 70g. Saturates: less than 20g. Total sugars: 90g. Salt: less than 6g. This information is intended as a guide only and is not individual advice. *If a serving is more than 100g for food and more than 150ml for drinks.					

KEY SYMBOLS AND NOTES						
 Wholegrains	 Oily fish	 Cholesterol lowering foods	 Alcohol	 Cooking with fat	FH Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH)	 Fruit and vegetables
Packed with the goodness from the whole grain they are higher in fibre, vitamins and minerals than their refined equivalents. People with healthy hearts tend to eat more wholegrains.	Rich in omega 3 fats which help your heart beat more regularly and prevent your blood from clotting. Aim for at least one portion (140g) per week.	Foods fortified with plant sterols and stanols, nuts, oats and soluble fibre from pulses, vegetables and fruits.	Keep to sensible limits. For men and women no more than 14 units per week, avoid binge drinking, have alcohol-free days each week. Women who are planning a pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid any alcohol.	We all need some fat but too much can cause weight gain. When you cook with fat choose heart healthy vegetable oils more often and use small amounts. For less fat - steam, microwave, poach, boil and casserole.	If you have FH you may be sensitive to the effects of foods high in cholesterol such as egg yolks, kidney, liver, shellfish. Speak to a dietitian or doctor about limiting your intake of these.	A portion is (a handful): one large (apple, orange, tomato); 2 small (plums, satsumas, beetroot); a handful (grapes, strawberries, sprouts); a heaped tablespoon dried fruit; 150ml, 100% unsweetened fruit juice or smoothie (counts as a maximum of 1 portion a day); 3 tablespoons vegetables/ chopped fruit; a small bowl of salad; 3 heaped tablespoons of pulses and beans (counts as a maximum of 1 portion a day).
*Triglycerides are a type of fat. The amount of triglyceride in the blood rises after a meal and then slowly decreases. If your triglyceride levels remain high after a meal you may be asked to reduce the amount of sugar, alcohol or fat in your diet.						



Let's be Cholesterol SMART[®] with Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)

Cholesterol SMART[®]

Can support heart health in different ways



- ♥ Low in Saturated Fats ♥ Heart Healthy Fats
- ♥ Fortified with Plant Sterols or Stanols
- ♥ Source of Fibre ♥ Vitamins & Minerals

Potentially Cholesterol SMART[®]

These may or may not be heart healthy



CHECK THE LABEL



NOT Cholesterol SMART[®]

Best to avoid



♥ HIGH IN SATURATED FAT ♥ HIGH IN SALT

HIGH IN SUGARS ♥ LACKING HEART HEALTHY NUTRIENTS



Use front-of-pack traffic light labels to guide your choices.

● GREEN = Go! ● AMBER = Occasionally ● RED = Avoid
Check for SATURATES, SUGARS & SALT. (Don't worry about Total Fats)
Find out more about food labels www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart/food-labels



Find out more about UPFs

www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart-upf



What Are UPFs?

- Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are typically classified under the NOVA system.
- The NOVA system classifies a food as a UPF based on how industrially processed it is, if it has five or more ingredients, and if those ingredients include things you wouldn't typically use in home cooking, such as additives and flavourings.

But Here's the Problem

- The UPF label doesn't reflect a food's nutritional value or whether it supports heart health.
- It ignores whether a food contains proven cholesterol-lowering nutrients such as fibre, heart healthy fats, or added plant stanols and sterols.
- While many UPFs are high in saturated fat, salt, and sugars – and should be limited – others are backed by strong evidence for supporting heart health.

Key Takeaway

Focus on Nutrients, Not Just Processing. Don't judge a food's healthiness solely by how processed it is. What truly matters for your health, including your heart, is the quality of the nutrients it provides.

Make Informed, Cholesterol SMART® Choices. While limiting some highly processed foods is wise, remember that some UPFs can offer real heart health benefits due to valuable nutrients like fibre, healthy fats, or added plant sterols and stanol esters.

Cholesterol SMART® with Everyday Foods – Even Some UPFs!

Here is what a heart-healthy diet looks like. It's based on foods with the right balance of healthy foods. Some are **ultra-processed**  others are not.

Choose unsaturated fats instead of saturated fats

Use moderate amounts of **vegetable-based spreads**  and oils such as olive, sunflower and rapeseed, **instead of** butter, lard or coconut or palm fats.

Go wholegrain

Choose **wholemeal bread** , brown or wild rice, oats, bulgur wheat, quinoa, or **fortified wholegrain cereals**  like Weetabix and bran flakes.

Include more plant proteins

Add beans, lentils, **tofu** , **soya products**  or **plain Quorn®**  pieces, mince or fillets to meals. Try part-swapping or replacing red and processed meats.

Eat at least 5-a-day

Keep it colourful and varied – fresh, frozen, or canned all count.

Cook more from scratch

Add proven cholesterol busters

- Oats or barley
- Beans, peas or lentils
- Unsalted/unsweetened nuts (a small handful)
- **Products with added plant stanols or sterols**  (spreads, yogurts, and shot drinks)*

Make SMARTER snack and drink swaps

Switch cakes, biscuits, crisps and sweetened drinks for:

- Fruit
- **Low-fat or fat-free yogurt with no added sugar**  or **sugar-free jelly** 
- A handful of dried fruit or nuts
- Switch to sugar-free or no added sugar versions of your favourite soft drinks
- Carrot sticks with **low-fat hummus** 

Packaged foods  Always check front-of-pack **traffic light labels** - look for **low (green)** in saturates, salt and sugars.

Let's Minimise!

- ✗ Red and processed meats
- ✗ Butter and animal fats
- ✗ Coconut and palm fats and oils

- ✗ Coconut milk and yogurt alternatives and coconut-based products
- ✗ Cakes, biscuits, crisps, pastries, fast food, sugary drinks
- ✗ Snacks with red traffic lights for saturated fats, salt or sugars



Check how heart healthy your diet is! www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart/diet-quiz



Visit Cholesterol SMART® hub www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart

HEART UK - actively supported by gifts in wills & donations www.heartuk.org.uk

* Foods fortified with plant sterols and stanol esters, when consumed as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle, have been shown to lower blood cholesterol. High cholesterol is a risk factor in the development of coronary heart disease. The beneficial effect is obtained with a daily intake of 1.5-3g plant sterols/stanols.



Charity Registration No: 1003904



Your SMART guide for making heart-healthy choices in every aisle. Packed with practical tips to support your cholesterol-lowering goals, both in-store or online.

				
Store Aisle	SMART Heroes	Also Go For...	Avoid	SMART Tips
Fruit & Veg 	Okra, aubergines, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, apricots, oranges and cabbage.	All and any fruit and veg. Aim for 5-a-day and eat the rainbow.	More than 150ml of fruit juice or smoothies in one day.	All count: fresh, frozen, canned in juice or water, and dried.
Meat & Plant Alternatives 	Tofu and soya mince.	Plain Quorn™ fillets, pieces or mince; other meat alternatives – check the label for green or amber saturated fat and salt; poultry without the skin.	Fatty, red and processed meat.	See the beans and lentils aisle for more Cholesterol SMART® proteins.
Fish 	One weekly serving of oily fish for your heart healthy omega-3!	All varieties count! Eat 2 portions every week, one of which should be oily (e.g., salmon, mackerel, and sardines).	Battered or with a creamy sauce.	Frozen and canned also count.
Milk, Yogurts & Alternatives 	Soya milk and yogurt alternatives, and yogurt and shot drinks with added stanols or sterols.	Low and zero fat dairy and unsweetened fortified plant-based options.	Full-fat milk and yogurts and all coconut-based alternatives.	Long-life (UHT) varieties also count and cost less!
Cheeses 		Quark, low fat cottage cheese, and cheeses labelled 'Low Fat' or 'Light'.	Large servings of full-fat cheeses and vegan hard cheeses.	Grated and stronger cheeses can help you use less. IN MODERATION 'Lower Fat', 'Lighter', 'Reduced Fat'.
Spreads & Fats 	With added plant stanols or sterols.	Spreads high in unsaturated fats, such as olive and sunflower.	Butter and other animal fats, vegan butter and shea butter.	See oils aisle for cooking oils.
Ready Meals (Chilled & Frozen) 	Add extra veg and beans to your ready meals.	Use front-of-pack traffic lights to compare saturated fat, salt, and sugars. Go for green and amber lights.	Red traffic lights for saturated fat and salt.	Veggie or vegan does not mean healthy! Compare front of pack and go for those with more green lights.
Beans & Lentils 	Any bean, any lentil!	Canned in water or dried. Half a large can or 3 spoons is a serving.	Cooking with animal or coconut fat, or added salt.	Aim for four servings a week. Add to your usual salads, stews, soups and meat dishes.
Rice & Pasta 	All wholegrains!	Brown, red, black, or wild rice; wholegrain pasta; pastas made from pulses such as lentils or chick peas.	Pasta and rice ready-made dishes with creamy or butter sauces.	Start gradually by mixing 50/50 white and wholegrain. Try a different rice, such as red or wild, for added flavour and texture.
Other Grains 	Pearl barley	Go wholegrain: bulgur wheat, quinoa, buckwheat, millet, popcorn.	Adding butter, coconut fat or salt. Serving with creamy sauces.	Experiment with new grains, and add to salads, or use in place of rice or pasta.
Oils 	Replace coconut and palm oils with other vegetable, seed or nut oils.	Polyunsaturated or monounsaturated oils such as olive, rapeseed, vegetable, corn, sunflower, avocado, and groundnut.	Coconut and palm oil.	All fats are high in calories – use oils sparingly. Standard oils work as well as cold-pressed.
Breakfast Cereals 	Porridge oats, oat flakes, and oat breakfast biscuits.	Wholegrain options low in sugar such as bran flakes, whole wheat biscuits, malt wheats, and no added sugar muesli.	Refined breakfast cereals and granolas with added sugars, coconut flesh or oil, chocolate, honey and syrups.	Boost cereals with some nuts and sliced banana or berries. Serve with low fat milk or plant drinks.
Nuts, Seeds & Dried Fruit 	All unsalted and unsweetened nuts and peanuts.	All seeds, such as chia, flaxseeds, hemp, sesame, and pumpkin, plus dried fruit without added sugars, and unsalted nut butters without palm oil.	Sugar, honey, chocolate, yogurt or salted varieties.	Sprinkle over cereals, add to stir fries, stews, salads, or enjoy as snacks.
Bakery 		Wholemeal, seeded, or 50/50 breads, rolls, pittas, English muffins and wraps.	Enriched breads such as brioche, cholla, naan, and croissants.	Use vegetable or stanol/sterol spreads; choose low fat fillings like egg or chicken salad, falafel, or hummous.
Sweet Bakery Treats 	Satisfy sweet cravings with fruit.	Currant or hot cross buns, tea cakes and malted loaves.	Sweet pastries, muffins, cakes, chilled desserts on a daily basis.	Fresh fruit, fruit with low fat natural yogurt, sugar-free jellies, or fat-free and sugar-free fruit yogurts.
Snacks 	Low salt oatcakes.	Unsalted popcorn and nuts, wholegrain and rye crackers, wholegrain rice cakes. IN MODERATION Rich tea, jaffa cakes, garibaldi, and fig rolls.	Shortbread biscuits, cookies and cream-filled, chocolate-coated or coconut biscuits.	Fruit, no added sugar and fat-free fruit yogurts, dried fruit, seeds and unsalted nuts.

As brands can vary, check the label for saturated fats, sugars and salt (there's no need to focus on total fat).

● **GREEN = Go!** ● **AMBER = Occasionally** ● **RED = Avoid**

Find out more about food labels www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart/food-labels



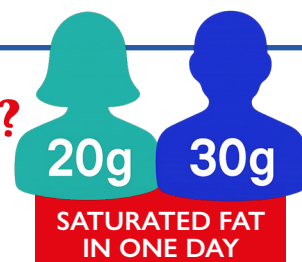
Be Fat SMART: Swap It to Drop It

Easy everyday swaps to help manage your blood cholesterol!

One of the most important things you can do to help lower your cholesterol is to cut down on saturated fat and replace it with unsaturated fat. Here are some easy swaps you can make at home and on the go to get the balance right.

Did you know...?

...you should not exceed



At Home...

- Red and processed meats, salamis, sausages, tinned meats



- Part replace with beans and veg in your recipes
- Try having 1 or 2 meat-free days a week
- Red meat: choose lean cuts and mince; no more than 3 times a week; keep portions to no more than 75g cooked (100g raw) - the size of your palm
- Small portions of other lean meat: chicken and other poultry (skin removed)
- Plant-based meat alternatives such as soya mince, tofu, plain Quorn™ pieces, fillets and mince

- Butter, ghee, other animal fats & tropical fats (coconut and palm)



- Vegetable, nut and seed oils and spreads such as olive, rapeseed, sunflower
- Vegetable spreads fortified with plant sterols or stanols

- Dairy milk & yogurts
- Coconut plant-based milk & yogurt alternatives



- Semi-skimmed, 1% and skimmed milk, low fat and 0% yogurts
- Fortified, unsweetened plant drinks and yogurt alternatives such as soya, almond, oat
- Dairy shot drinks and yogurts fortified with plant sterols or stanols

- Hard, semi-hard cheeses (dairy & plant-based): such as, cheddar, stilton, brie, goats, Manchego, Leicester
- Dairy cheese spreads



- Reduced-fat / 'light' versions; keep portions small - two-thumb-size width
- Grate hard cheese - it goes further!
- Try low fat (less than 3% fat) cheeses such as Quark, cottage, and cream cheeses
- Some plant-based cream cheeses are low in saturated fat - check the label

- Dairy cream (single, double, crème fraîche, soured)
- Plant-based double cream / whippable cream alternatives

- 0% fat Greek-style yogurts or plant-based (non-coconut) versions
- Soya & oat single cream alternatives

- Biscuits: chocolate covered, cream filled, butter based such as shortbreads



- Plain biscuits such as rich tea, ginger nuts, garibaldi

CLICK OR SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE
www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart-fat





SCAN TO FIND
OUT MORE

Cholesterol
SMART®

Did you know...?
...you should
not exceed



- Cakes: cream, butter cream, icing, chocolate based, pastries, doughnuts



**9g
sats**

- Chocolates and sweets

- Snacks: sausage rolls, pork pies, salted or sweetened nuts and popcorn



**1g
sats**

- Hot cross or currant bun, malt loaf, home made cakes using vegetable spreads or oils
- Zero fat and zero sugar flavoured yogurts, piece of fruit

- Enjoy these less often and in smaller quantities. Choose smaller versions such as 2-finger KitKat, fun sized chocolate

- Unsalted and unsweetened nuts incl. peanuts, low fat hummous with couple of oat cakes or vegetable sticks, a piece of fruit, plain popped corn

At Coffee Shops...

- Standard milk-based coffees, chai teas, hot chocolates

- Croissants, sweet pastries, cakes, biscuits

- The choice is yours! Ask for skimmed milk or a plant-based drink (not coconut!). Hold the cream. Sugar free syrups

- Scone, tea cake, nuts, dried fruit

Take Aways and Ready Meals

- Curry: rich creamy or butter sauces such as Korma, Tikka Massala, Butter chicken



**8g
sats**

- Kebabs: donner, lamb, dressings

- Pasta dishes: creamy, cheesy, meaty (lasagne, Bolognese), pesto

- Chinese, Japanese: fried meat and fish, egg fried noodles, beef dishes, fried rice

- Pizza: thick or filled crust, meat feast, cheese feasts

- Sandwiches: cheese, mayo, dressings, processed meat (salami, bacon ham, sausage) or red meat

- Savoury pastries: sausage rolls, cheese and meat pastries



**10g
sats**

**11g
sats**



**1.5g
sats**

- Dry or tomato based sauces such as tikka, jalfrezi

- Sheesh chicken kebabs with lots of salad

- Tomato based, fish, olive oil with vegetables. Serve with extra salad

- Sashimi or Sushi – super omega-3 fats! Plain noodles with lean protein such as chicken or fish, broths, stir fries with tofu, vegetables, chicken or seafood

- Thin crust, plain toppings such as margherita or vegetables

- Keep your eye on portions. Add extra vegetables or side salad



**1g
sats**

- Plain or roast chicken salad, egg salad, tuna or salmon salad, falafel or hummous wrap
- Poke (rice) bowl, sushi

Our Top Tips

LOOK AT FRONT OF PACK LABELLING:



Check the calories! 1 single serve with all the sides – should provide no more than 500kcal for a woman and 600kcal for a man.

HEART UK
THE CHOLESTEROL CHARITY



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Easy Ways to Shop SMART



Weekly Meal Plan

Write a weekly meal plan and use this to make a shopping list – it saves money and helps reduce food waste.



Always Make a Shopping List

And keep to it! Helps prevent impulse buys and keeps costs down.



Check Your Fridge & Cupboards

Before planning your meals: see if you have any ingredients that need using up.
Before going shopping: check what you have against your list to avoid duplicates.



Never Shop Hungry

Have a healthy snack before you go – it reduces impulse buying!



Be Deal-Wise

Multi-buys aren't always healthier or cheaper!
Compare the price and nutrition information per 100g.
Check the use by date – will you use it in time?



Avoid 'Unhealthy' Aisles

Avoid going down the sweet bakery, cakes, biscuits and confectionary aisles. Keep temptation at bay!



SMART Plant Proteins

Beans, lentils, and quinoa are great affordable protein options.
Seeds: just a spoonful a day, goes a long way.
Unsalted/unsweetened peanuts are a great affordable nut option.



Buy Loose Where You Can

It reduces packaging and helps you buy only what you need.



Bulk Cook & Batch Freeze

Buying in bigger packs can save money – cook and freeze in portions to reduce waste.



Switch to Own 'Essentials' Brands

Many supermarket own brands offer similar nutrition at lower prices – especially for staples.



Value Doesn't Mean Less Healthy

Beans, oats, tinned fish and own-brand frozen veg all pack a punch and are super affordable.



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Must-Haves

Try and include as many of the following in your shopping list:

- ✓ Oats or oat-based breakfast cereals.
- ✓ Beans or lentils – dried or canned in water.
- ✓ Polyunsaturated or olive spread, or fat spread with added plant stanols or sterols.
- ✓ Healthy oils made from nuts, seeds or vegetables (**coconut and palm oil don't count**).
- ✓ Unsalted nuts, including peanuts.
- ✓ Fruit – fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in juice or water.
- ✓ Vegetables – fresh, frozen or canned in water and keep it colourful.
- ✓ Wholemeal bread, rolls, and wraps.
- ✓ Whole grains – quinoa, brown, black, red or wild rice and wholegrain pasta.
- ✓ A daily yogurt or drink "shot" with added plant stanols or sterols.
- ✓ Oily fish – such as salmon, pilchards, sardines and trout – canned, fresh or frozen.

Find Out More

Cholesterol SMART[®] - step-by-step healthy eating and lifestyle plan
www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart

Shopping SMART on a budget
www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart-budget

Understanding food labels
www.heartuk.org.uk/cholesterol-smart/food-labels



Where can I find out more?

Our range of materials include our Healthy Eating Guide, Blood Fats Explained and Familial Hypercholesterolaemia booklets. There are web pages on a range of topics on our website including foods that help lower cholesterol, healthy oils and fats and handy tips for eating out.

General enquiries

hello@heartuk.org.uk

Literature orders

literature@heartuk.org.uk

Email or call our Cholesterol Helpline

ask@heartuk.org.uk
0345 450 5988

Will you help the next person needing support?

HEART UK relies on donations and gifts in wills to provide the information you are reading today.

Please help the next person in need of support by making a donation today via www.heartuk.org.uk

Raise funds

There are many ways you can raise funds for HEART UK. Visit our website for more information.

National Cholesterol Month

October is National Cholesterol Month - a whole month devoted to raising awareness and funds for HEART UK.

Visit our website

You can find out more on our website at www.heartuk.org.uk

Check out our frequently asked questions, recipe ideas, what your cholesterol and triglyceride numbers mean and sign up to our free monthly e-newsletter for more facts and tips to help you.

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Lowering Cholesterol, Saving Lives

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