

Health Insights

November 2024

Heart-Smart Habits

Diet plays a big part in why some people suffer from high cholesterol. Modifying your diet even a little can lower your cholesterol—lowering your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Reduce the Amount of Fatty Meat

Make meat a minor part of your meals and focus on including plenty of fruits and vegetables. Trim fat and skin from meats and poultry, and steer clear of fatty cuts of beef, pork, and lamb. When dining out, consider choosing smaller portions of meat or opting for vegetarian dishes.

Eat Low-Fat Dairy Products

Avoid dairy containing whole milk and cream.

Snack Wisely

Opt for low-fat snacks such as unbuttered popcorn, dried fruits, or fresh fruits and vegetables. Avoid high-fat, high-calorie options like chips and candy.

Reduce Saturated Fat in Food Preparation

Use a small amount of olive oil or cooking spray instead of butter or margarine. Avoid palm and coconut oils, and choose healthier alternatives like canola, sunflower, safflower, corn, soybean, olive, or peanut oils. Utilize cooking methods such as baking, broiling, roasting, steaming, or stewing over frying.

Reduce Your Dietary Cholesterol Intake

Limit yourself to no more than four egg yolks per week and replace one whole egg with two egg whites in recipes. Keep your daily intake of lean meat, fish, and poultry to no more than three ounces per meal. Additionally, avoid cholesterol-rich meats like liver, brains, and kidneys.

Eat Fiber-Rich Foods

Opt for fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and legumes that are low in calories and high in fiber and complex carbohydrates.

Go for Nuts, Fruits, and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are water-dense, contain lots of nutrients, and protect your heart. Nuts are a great source of protein, but should be eaten in moderation because they are high in calories.

Eat Lots of Fish

Fish have essential fatty acids (omega-3s and omega-6s).

Reduce Your Salt Intake

Use herbs and spices to flavor your food instead of table salt. Be aware of the sodium content in foods such as soups and sauces.

Avoid Trans Fats

Trans fats raise LDL cholesterol levels (bad cholesterol) and lower HDL cholesterol levels (good cholesterol). Avoid foods containing trans fats completely or eat them in moderation.

Drink Alcohol in Moderation

Women may have up to one drink per day; men may have up to two drinks per day.

Read Product Labels

Avoid foods with the following items listed as one of the first ingredients: meat fat, coconut or palm oil, cream, butter, egg or yolk solids, whole milk solids, cocoa butter, chocolate, or hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fat or oil.



Mental Health Moment

Stigma

Many individuals with mental health illnesses or challenges either do not seek treatment or take steps to keep treatment secret for fear of being treated differently.

Stigma, prejudice, and discrimination against those with mental health illnesses or challenges are prevalent, ranging from subtle to overt. These issues can have detrimental effects on those who are already struggling, including:

- Lower self-esteem
- Increased psychiatric symptoms
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Difficulties in relationships and social isolation
- Challenges in the workplace
- Decreased likelihood of continuing or seeking treatment
- Experiences of bullying, harassment, or physical violence

You can help reduce the stigma associated with mental health illnesses and challenges by supporting those affected. Consider the following actions:

- **Talk openly:** Engage in honest discussions about mental health issues and available treatments to normalize these conversations.
- **Educate yourself:** Gain a better understanding of mental health illnesses and available treatments. Share accurate information to combat misinformation and stereotypes.
- **Challenge misconceptions:** Stand up against negative comments and misconceptions about mental health, promoting a more informed and empathetic perspective.
- **Show compassion and empathy:** Offer support and understanding to those experiencing mental health illnesses, recognizing their struggles and celebrating their strengths.
- **Advocate for systemic change:** Support policies and initiatives that promote mental health awareness and access to care, working towards a more inclusive and supportive environment.

By taking these steps, you can contribute to a more supportive and understanding community for individuals with mental health conditions.

American Psychiatric Association. (2024, March). Stigma, prejudice and discrimination against people with mental illness. American Psychiatric Association. www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination

Blood Pressure Basics

What Is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the amount of force it takes your heart to pump blood through your body. Your blood pressure normally rises and falls throughout the day.

What Do the Numbers Mean?

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). During a reading, a health care professional will record your blood pressure as two numbers:

- The first number is your **systolic blood pressure**. It indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls when your heart beats.
- The second number is your **diastolic blood pressure**. It indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls while the heart is resting between beats.

While both numbers are significant, more attention is typically given to the first number—your systolic blood pressure—to figure out your risk for heart disease.

Consider the following blood pressure categories recognized by the American Heart Association:

- Normal: Less than 120 mmHg systolic and less than 80 mmHg diastolic
- Elevated: 120-129 mmHg systolic and less than 80 mmHg diastolic
- High blood pressure stage 1: 130-139 mmHg systolic or 80-89 mmHg diastolic
- High blood pressure stage 2: 140 mmHg or higher systolic or 90 or higher mmHg diastolic
- Hypertensive crisis: Higher than 180 mmHg systolic and/or higher than 120 mmHg diastolic

If your numbers are considered high, discuss the results with your doctor immediately. Conversely, your doctor can also evaluate any unusually low blood pressure readings.



Healthy Slow Cooker Chili

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp coconut or olive oil
- 1.5 pounds ground beef
- 1 medium white onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 16-oz cans dark kidney beans
- 1 14.5-oz can fire roasted diced tomatoes (regular canned diced tomatoes will work too)
- 2 4-oz cans diced green chiles
- 1 cup chicken or beef broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tbsp chili powder
- ½ tsp cumin
- 2 tsp salt, or more to taste
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper (optional)
- ½ tsp black pepper, or more to taste

Directions:

1. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Once hot, add in a drizzle of oil, then add the ground beef. Brown the beef, breaking it up as it cooks. Drain any excess fat.
2. Add the diced onion and minced garlic and cook for four to six more minutes until the onion is tender.
3. Transfer the ground beef mixture to your slow cooker. Add the kidney beans, diced tomatoes, green chiles, spices, bay leaf, and broth. Stir everything together until well combined.
4. Cover and cook the chili on high for five to six hours or on low for seven to eight hours.
5. When the chili is finished cooking, taste and season with salt and pepper as needed. Serve immediately, garnished with your favorite toppings like sour cream, green onion, avocado, or cheddar cheese.

Calories 429, Total fat 6g, Carbs 58.9g, Protein 34.9g

Carver, A. (2023, March 16). Healthy Slow Cooker Chili. All the Healthy Things. allthehealthythings.com/healthy-slow-cooker-chili/#tasty-recipes-3819-jump-target



November Quiz

Change your diet to lower your cholesterol

1. Dietary cholesterol does not affect your blood cholesterol level?
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. What action will *not* help to reduce your cholesterol level?
 - a. Reduce your salt intake
 - b. Use cooking methods such as baking, broiling, roasting, steaming, or stewing
 - c. Reduce fish intake
 - d. Opt for low-fat low-calorie snacks

Understanding your blood pressure reading

3. What number in your blood pressure is most important and what does it represent?

4. What is a normal blood pressure?

- a. Less than 120 mmHg systolic and less than 80 mmHg diastolic
- b. 120-129 mmHg systolic and less than 80 mmHg diastolic
- c. 130-139 mmHg systolic or 80-89 mmHg diastolic
- d. 140 mmHg or higher systolic or 90 or higher mmHg diastolic
- e. Higher than 180 mmHg systolic and/or higher than 120 mmHg diastolic

Mental Health Moment

5. How can you help reduce the stigma associated with mental health?



Healthy Habits Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Welcome to November! Start the Marathon in a Month challenge.	2
3 Daylight Saving Time Ends Schedule Sunday: Sit down and plan your week.	4	5	6 Wellness Wednesday: Sit down with a good book for half an hour.	7	8	9 Social Saturday: Invite your friends over for a game night.
10	11 Veterans Day	12 Tuesday's Tip: Save time in the morning by packing your bag and lunch the night before.	13	14 Thirsty Thursday: Try to drink at least 2 liters of water today.	15	16
17	18 Money Monday: Create a budget for presents, food, and activities for the upcoming holiday season.	19	20 Workout Wednesday: Grab a friend and hit the gym today.	21 Challenge Check In: How many miles have you walked already this month? Plan out the remaining week to hit your goal.	22	23 Self-Care Saturday: Do something today to help you relax and unwind.
24 Sunny Sunday: Spend some time outdoors today.	25	26 Thoughtful Tuesday: Write a thank you note to someone important in your life.	27	28 Thanksgiving	29 Friendly Friday: Call a friend you haven't spoken to in a while.	30

30 DAY WELLNESS CHALLENGE

Marathon in a Month



Use the suggested schedule below or create your own. You can use a free app like MapMyRun or the Nike Run Club to track your miles. Get outside, breathe in the fresh air, and clear your mind while completing a Marathon in a Month. Record your mileage on the days you walk or run, and then add up your totals at the end of each week.

Daily Mileage Schedule

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	WEEKLY TOTAL:
	0.5 Mile		0.5 Mile		1 Mile	1 Mile	
	1 Mile		1.5 Miles		1 Mile	2 Miles	
	2 Miles	1 Mile		1 Mile		3 Miles	
	2.5 Miles		3 Miles		2 Miles	3.2 Miles	

MONTHLY TOTAL: _____

Answers to Quiz:

Q1: b. False

Q2: c. Reduce fish intake

Q3: The top number, systolic. This indicates the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats.

Q4: a. Less than 120 mmHg systolic and less than 80 mmHg diastolic

Q5: Talk openly, educate yourself, challenge misconceptions, show compassion and empathy, advocate for systemic change.