

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a substance similar to fats, which our body needs to perform various functions like, producing hormones, helping to form bile and vitamin D, and to form part of the cellular membranes of our organism.

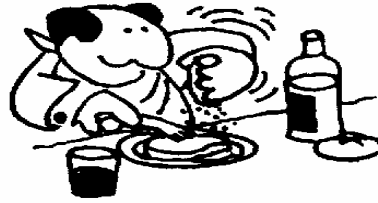
The Cholesterol that our body uses normally, proceeds from two ways: the intake of cholesterol existing in some **foods** and the cholesterol produced by our own **organism**.

WHY SHOULD WE CHECK OUR CHOLESTEROL LEVELS?

If cells receive more cholesterol than necessary, they cannot eliminate the excess. The unused cholesterol can accumulate in the coronary arteries, reducing the quantity of blood that reaches the heart. This is known as arteriosclerosis, and is the main cause of **heart disease**.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE A HIGH CHOLESTEROL CONTINUALLY ARE MORE LIABLE TO SUFFER HEART ATTACKS THAN THOSE WHO MAINTAIN LOWER LEVELS

The damage caused by high levels of cholesterol is augmented by **smoking, high blood pressure, obesity** and **diabetes**.



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "GOOD" AND "BAD" CHOLESTEROL?

The cholesterol to be transported by the blood needs special particles called lipoproteins. The most important are:

- **Lipoproteins-LDL** or low density. The cholesterol which joins these lipoproteins is called LDL-cholesterol or "**bad cholesterol**" because it forms deposits on the blood vessels. These lipoproteins increase when too much animal fat is eaten – cheeses, cured sausages and meats.
- **Lipoproteins-HDL** or high density. These lipoproteins eliminate the excess cholesterol deposited on the artery walls. This HDL-Cholesterol is "**good cholesterol**". It increases by exercise, diet rich in fibre and low in fats and cholesterol.

OPTIMUM VALUES OF CHOLESTEROL

The levels of cholesterol under **200** mg/dl are considered optimum whereas levels between **200** and **239** mg/dl suppose a moderate risk of cardiac illness, and levels above **240** mg/dl are considered high risk.

Level of cholesterol in the blood

Less than 200 mg/dl	Optimum values
Between 200 and 239 mg/dl	Moderate risk values
Above 240 mg/dl	High risk values

IF MY CHOLESTEROL LEVEL IS HIGH, HOW DO I REDUCE IT?

The first steps to bring down cholesterol blood levels are:

- Follow an adequate **diet**
- **Loose weight** in cases of **obesity**
- **Physical exercise**
- **Decrease smoking**



WHAT FOODS ARE RECOMMENDABLE?

It is necessary to **eliminate** or **reduce** the consumption of:

- Egg yolk
- Meat fat, cured meats, sausages, pates, liver,...
- Pastries, cakes, biscuits
- Pre-cooked meals
- Lard, butter, bacon fat...

It is **recommendable**:

- Increase the intake of fibre by salads, vegetables, pulses, fresh fruit.
- Milk and by products skimmed or semi-skimmed.
- Use olive oil for cooking and dressing.

Permitted foods	Forbidden foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimmed milk, yoghurt, Skimmed cheese, curds. • Lean meats (veal beef),, skinless chicken and turkey, rabbit, boiled ham • Fish (blue and white) • Egg white • Bread white, wholemeal, cereals, pastas, pulses, • Vegetables • Oils –olive, soya, corn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full cream milk, unskimmed yoghurts and cheeses • Fatty meats (lamb, pork, duck), cured meats, Frankfurter sausages, Hamburger • Liver, Kidneys, pate • Shellfish (prawns, crayfish) • Fish in oil • Egg yolk • Cakes, biscuits, icecreams, chocolate, sorbets, coconut, sweets • Butter, lards, cream, mayonnaise

OTHER IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONS

Other measures to reduce high cholesterol levels are:

- Physical exercise; walking, swimming, cycling
- Loose weight
- Stop smoking
- Consume alcohol in moderation

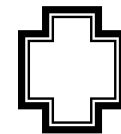


WHEN IS MEDICAL TREATMENT NECESSARY?

Often modifications to the diet and exercise, stopping smoking improves the levels of cholesterol. If to the contrary then it is advisable to seek advice from your doctor.

CHOLESTEROL

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT CHOLESTEROL?



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