

How can I improve my cholesterol naturally?

Many American are plagued with abnormal cholesterol levels. There are three main components to cholesterol that are treated: HDL (good cholesterol), LDL (bad cholesterol), and Triglycerides. If your LDL is elevated, this may require a prescription. However, if your HDL is too low and/or your Triglycerides are too high, then there are some natural ways to improve these numbers.

- 1) **Exercise.** One of the best ways to raise HDL is exercise! 30 minutes a day 5 times a week is optimal. If you don't regularly exercise, start with walking 10 minutes a day or find an activity you enjoy.



- 2) **Olive oil.** Substitute palm and corn oil with olive oil as much as possible. Avoid trans fats, which are found in margarine, shortening, and fried foods. Monounsaturated fats, found in olive oil, nuts, and avocados can raise HDL.



- 3) **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** have been found to increase HDL and decrease Triglycerides. The proper dosage is 3 grams a day. This amounts to 6 fish pills a day. Don't be misled by "super-potency" fish oil pills that state they have 1000mg per pill. If you read the label, you will notice they actually have less than 500mg of omega-3 fatty acids (DHA and EPA). Make sure the brand has been tested for mercury. Costco carries an affordable fish oil 1200mg supplement which has 684mg of omega-3 fatty acids per capsule (read the label to make sure you're getting the correct one). You can take 4 capsules a day (instead of 6) because it is more potent.



- 4) **Niacin.** This is the most potent vitamin that will increase HDL and decrease Triglycerides. Slo-Niacin is a good formulation of niacin that can be found over the counter. Start with one capsule a day and plan to have your cholesterol rechecked 3 months after starting therapy. You can take an aspirin 30 minutes beforehand to minimize flushing.