

## **General Guidelines for Decreasing Triglycerides and Cholesterol Levels**

- ❖ Avoid alcohol.
- ❖ Avoid a high intake of regular sodas and desserts.
- ❖ Limit red meats to < 3-4 ounces twice a week. A high intake of saturated fats may increase your low density lipoprotein levels (LDL's) and increase your risk for heart disease.
- ❖ Avoid foods containing trans fatty acids (on food labels as hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated vegetable oil or shortning). Common foods which contain these are: snack foods (corn, potato, or tortilla chips, popcorn), fried foods, some peanut butters, crackers, some cereals, and commercially prepared baked goods. Trans fats can increase your LDL's.
- ❖ Aim for at least 30 minutes a day of moderate intensity physical activity (ie. brisk walking). This can raise HDL (beneficial) cholesterol levels.
- ❖ Maintain a healthy weight to increase HDL levels.
- ❖ Monounsaturated fats (in olive and canola oil, nuts, olives, avocado, and fish) can decrease your LDL levels without lowering your high density lipoprotein levels (HDL's) like polyunsaturated fats do.
- ❖ Plant sterols incorporated into a low fat diet can reduce total cholesterol levels by 10%. Benechol, Take Control, Promise Active, Promise Super Shots, and Smart Balance spreads contain plant sterols. GeniSoy snack crisps also contain plant sterols. Two to 3 g of phyto- sterols per day is recommended. These plant based compounds block the absorption of cholesterol from the digestive tract (to help lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol).

- ❖ Ground psyllium (Metamucil) and has 6 g of soluble fiber/tablespoon. Foods high in soluble fiber are oatmeal, oat bran, oat bran cereals, whole grain breads and pasta, barley, dried beans and peas, seeds, and varied fruits and vegetables. Fresh vegetables and fruits have an average of one to 3 g of fiber per serving.
- ❖ For adults, 10-25 g of soluble fiber per day is suggested. This can block fat and cholesterol from the absorbed into the blood to decrease LDL cholesterol. Fiber should be increased gradually. Drinking plenty of caffeine free liquids can help to minimize digestive discomfort.
- ❖ Incorporate foods high in soluble fiber such as: oatmeal, oat bran cereals, whole grain products (whole grain breads and pastas, barley), varied fruits and vegetables, dried beans and peas, seeds.
- ❖ A low fat diet is considered as having less than or equal to 30% of total Calorie needs coming from fat.
- ❖ High doses of niacin can raise HDL cholesterol and decrease LDL cholesterol but should only be used under medical supervision because that may alter blood sugar levels and increase liver enzymes.
- ❖ Red yeast rice (1200 mg twice daily) can lower LDL cholesterol up to 30%. It contains substances similar to statin drugs. Potential side effects may be similar to statin drugs (elevated liver enzymes and muscle pain). Supplementation should be monitored by a healthcare provider. Consumer Labs has an evaluation of some brands of over-the-counter supplements.
- ❖ Soy protein may reduce total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol especially if it replaces higher fat protein sources -- for example red meats. Twenty-five or more grams of soy protein per day from soy milk, soy protein powder, soy-based cereals, etc. is thought to be desirable.

*Reviewed by Theresa Shepherd, MS, RD, CDN, CSO, 2/2018.*