



This is the #1 nutrient to lower cholesterol

If you've been told your cholesterol is too high, you're not alone – About 86 million US adults age 20 or older have total cholesterol levels above 200 mg/dL, the upper limit for normal total cholesterol. Often, this comes as a surprise, because high cholesterol has no noticeable symptoms or warning signs. But ignoring it should never be an option, because high cholesterol levels can lead to the buildup of plaque in the arteries, increasing the risk of heart attacks and stroke. Since heart disease is the number one killer in the United States, it makes good sense to prioritize healthy cholesterol levels.

While medication may be necessary for some situations, making dietary and lifestyle changes is often enough to manage cholesterol naturally. By consuming cholesterol-lowering foods, you can do your body a favor, reduce your risk of heart disease, and improve your overall health.

As you probably know, there are two types of cholesterol: the good kind (HDL) and the bad kind (LDL). We want to lower LDL. Regular exercise is great for keeping HDL up, but for lowering LDL, the standout nutrient is soluble fiber. Food sources of soluble fiber help lower LDL cholesterol in at least 5 different ways. Here's how it works:

Binding Bile Acids: Soluble fiber grabs onto bile acids in your gut. This helps use up more cholesterol from your body.

Turning into Short-Chain Fatty Acids: In your colon, soluble fiber changes into useful compounds that signal your liver to produce less cholesterol.

Catching Dietary Cholesterol: Soluble fiber literally traps cholesterol in your food so that it leaves your body instead of entering your blood.

Helping Your Liver: Research is looking into how soluble fiber might directly help your liver manage cholesterol better.

Controlling Blood Sugar: Soluble fiber helps prevent blood sugar swings. Better control of blood sugar and insulin can lead to a healthier lipid profile, including lower levels of LDL cholesterol.

Getting plenty of soluble fiber is easy! Try:

- Oats and barley
- Nuts and seeds
- Beans, lentils, and peas
- Fruits like apples, figs, oranges, and avocado
- Veggies like carrots, sweet potatoes, and brussels sprouts

Here's a simple meal plan to get you started:

- **Breakfast:** Oatmeal with unsweetened plant milk, walnuts, and apples with cinnamon
- **Lunch:** Bean tacos with veggies and guacamole; orange slices
- **Dinner:** Herbed fish, tofu, or poultry with barley and roasted brussels sprouts
- **Snacks:** Sunflower or pumpkin seeds, whole grain fig bars, fresh fruit, or a nut and dried fruit trail mix

Classic Bean & Barley Soup



This hearty, delicious soup is packed with many of nature's best sources of cholesterol-lowering soluble fiber.

You will need:

- 2 tbsp of canola oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup pearly barley
- 6 cups of vegetable stock or water
- about 2 lb of cubed (dice-sized) vegetables, including one or more of the following: winter squash, turnips, parsnips, rutabagas, carrots, sweet potatoes, potatoes
- 1 15-oz can kidney or other type of beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tbsp Italian seasoning

Saute the onion in a large saucepan over medium high heat. When hot, add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and cook for 1 minute more.

Add the barley and cook, stirring constantly, until the barley starts to toast and stick, about 5 minutes. Stir in the stock or water and bring to a boil, then lower the heat so the liquid simmers.