

# CHOLESTEROL



## Naturopathy



# Cholesterol & Naturopathy

Let's talk about cholesterol. Now, when I say the word cholesterol did you have a moment where you went ooh that's bad, that's a bad thing? That is certainly what I grew up believing.

I remember hearing people say if you have cholesterol it is bad, which is absolutely ridiculous.

So first of all, I just want to say that even though it has become this word that has an unmerited and negative connotation.



I'm going to go into bat for cholesterol because it is a component in every cell of the body, so we need cholesterol.

**If you don't have any cholesterol, you are not alive!**

Cholesterol has really important roles in the body. So it's a precursor of bile acids. You need bile acids, (which produce bile) to digest fat.

So if you are not producing enough bile and don't have enough cholesterol to produce enough bile, you're not breaking down fats efficiently.



Remember it's not just about fat digestion for energy, it's also your fat soluble vitamins and nutrients that you need for fat digestion.

Cholesterol is also a building block or a component of hormones, your cortical steroids and your sex hormones in particular.

If you have low cholesterol you're not making enough of these important sex hormones.

It's not just a one size fits all. Everything plays into everything else and works synergistically in our body. It's a really simplistic idea to label something all good or all bad. It just doesn't work like that! 1/4 of the cholesterol comes from the diet.



I remember growing up in the 80's and the supermarket shelves were full of margarines and it was all about low cholesterol.

If you have an issue with high cholesterol, most of it is made internally, endogenously through our body, the largest portion of your cholesterol is not through your diet.

If you're thinking about what you should reduce in your diet, it will be more helpful to look at reducing high fats.

**It's not all fats, but particularly damaged fats as well as refined carbohydrates.**



When you are tested for cholesterol, you get tested for a lot of markers, triglycerides and total cholesterol, but there's also these 2 terms HDL & LDL, that I notice people get confused about. So LDL is the lipoprotein.

The LDL's are made up of lipids and proteins but they transport cholesterol around in the blood.

So they are not cholesterol, but they are a transporter.

It is a good way to measure your levels of cholesterol because it is there transporting it, but they're not same thing.



LDL is low density lipoprotein and HDL is high-density lipoprotein.

Generally we're realizing that it's not as simple as this, but it used to be considered that HDL is the good guy, and the LDL was bad guy, but it's not as black and white as that.

If you have lots of cholesterol, lots of LDL, lots of HDL, but they are undamaged and your blood vessels are in good condition and the lipoproteins and cholesterol are all in good condition and they're doing their job and transporting it around in the blood.



If it transports it to where it's needed, and goes into the cells and the cholesterol is used for making bile and hormones, we don't have a problem.

**The issue is that if the lipoproteins and the cholesterol are damaged or if the blood vessels are damaged, what happens is you get an accumulation of cholesterol in the blood vessels, which becomes a self-perpetuating cycle of damage.**

**Then you get increased hypertension and increased cardiovascular type risk events.**





There is a factor in having too much cholesterol in the sense that, if you've got a lot of oxidized or inflamed oxidized cholesterol then obviously having more of it is worse than having less oxidized cholesterol.

If you have perfectly healthy cholesterol, then how much cholesterol you have is less of an issue.

**Therefore treating cholesterol is really about making sure that you don't have a highly inflamed system or you don't have a lot of risk of oxidation of the cholesterol.**



# Let's Look At Some Things That Risk Oxidation & Increase Inflammation

## Stress Management

Make sure you have good levels of exercise, a minimum 30 minutes per day.

## Weight Management

Manage your weight if it is needed.

## Smoking

Obviously this is a high oxidation risk.



## Nutrition

Reduce high processed foods and make sure that your diet contains lots of antioxidants. You can get your antioxidants in fresh fruit and veggies.

I hope that this message is clear, it's not about cholesterol itself per say, although that can become an issue.

It's about having healthy cholesterol and, not having damaged cholesterol.

Remember too, that cholesterol is really important in injury sites.



Cholesterol gets sent to help in the repair process, so you are going to have a collection of cholesterol around injury sites in the blood vessels. So you can see that becomes a bit of an issue if you don't have any cholesterol.

## Nutrients

**Some specific nutrients are;**

### Lipoic Acid

This is an antioxidant but what makes this one unique is that it's fat soluble. So cholesterol has a fat base that's really important as it prevents the oxidation of the LDL cholesterol.



## Garlic

There have been trials where garlic has reduced the total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol.

Take 600 milligrams of dried garlic powder daily.

If you are using Kyolic, (a brand here that sells aged garlic extract in Australia) when taking this brand use just 2 caps a day.

So obviously adding that in your diet can be helpful or put lots and lots of garlic in everything.



# Vitamin D

The proper term for Vitamin D is cholecalciferol. Cholesterol gets converted to the precursor of Vitamin D 3. Then UV light or sunlight, then converts that precursor to the D 3.

**So Vitamin D is an interesting one because we need cholesterol to make vitamin D, we also need vitamin D to have good cholesterol.**

It's really helpful to test your levels of Vitamin D, which is the easy to do and just see where you sit on that.



Generally mainstream medical testing will suggest that you have at least 50 IU a day.

Functionally naturopaths often want that level up even higher up even as close as 80 - 100 and sometimes even a bit over.

## CoQ10

CoQ10 is really important in cholesterol management particularly if you are in statins.

So statins do directly reduce levels of CoQ10, so that's crucial if you are on statins.



## Herbs

We have a term (or an action) in herbalism called choleric that is directly increasing production of bile acids.

**Some herbs that are very helpful in cholesterol are:**

### St Mary's Thistle

St Mary's Thistle is a herb that has an active silymarin. (Silymarin refers to the extract from the seeds of the plant *Silybum marianum*, also called "milk thistle.")





The active ingredients of milk thistle are chemicals called flavonoids.

The flavonoids in milk thistle are silybin, silydianin, and silychristin. Together, they are called silymarin).

## **Globe Artichoke**

Globe Artichoke would probably be the key herb that we think of when we think of cholesterol.

It's the leaves of the Globe Artichoke plant not the fruit, although eating the fruit will be beneficial as well.



## Dandelion Root

Dandelion Root is great for general liver health and is really important.

## Fenugreek

Fenugreek as another herb for cholesterol.

## Foods That Are Good To Eat

### Alfalfa & Alfalfa Sprouts

**Plant Sterols** (This is where we had the margarine push in the 80's because it was showing that plant cells are high in vegetable oils).



The problem with that though, is that vegetable oils can easily oxidize. So the last thing you want to do is have oxidised or damaged fats as it will directly contribute to the problem with having high cholesterol. So I suggest that people stick to whole food forms, like nuts and legumes.

## **Soluble Fibre**

Psyllium and Slippery Elm. The research dose that's helpful for reducing cholesterol is 15 to 30 grams a day so that's a fair bit.

So take powders, mixing them into porridge, yogurt, smoothies and things like that to get that level.



## Fish Oil

Fish oil is so 3.5 grams of fish oil per day has been shown to lower triglycerides.

I hope this has been helpful to you. All the best in balancing your cholesterol.



**This Ebook is a collaboration between  
Jayne Larkins from Vital Child  
& Global Healing Exchange**

