



# Wellness Buddy Wednesday Tip

## Diet and Cholesterol

*Elevated blood cholesterol predicts cardiovascular disease. Two types of blood cholesterol are important in cardiovascular disease: LDL and HDL. LDLs are harmful because they carry cholesterol to the tissues and can deposit cholesterol in artery walls, worsening atherosclerosis. HDLs are beneficial, because they carry cholesterol away from the arteries for disposal. Exercise raises HDL and lowers LDL levels.*



***Fitness is hot!***

People are often confused about the role of diet in connection with high blood cholesterol. They think cholesterol in foods raises blood cholesterol. It does, but regular dietary fat—especially saturated fat—raises it much more. The most important key to lowering blood cholesterol seems to be to eat as little total fat as possible while still eating a balanced diet. The fat you do eat should be mostly the unsaturated type.

Fish oils are among dietary defenses against heart disease. The fatty acids in fish oil alter the blood's chemistry so as to favor the dissolving of blood clots over the making of them. One or two fish meals a week are all it takes to gain this benefit.

Dietary fiber also offers protection against heart disease. High-fiber foods move quickly through the digestive tract, and carry cholesterol with them. Diets high in fiber are typically low in fat and cholesterol anyway—another fiber advantage.

**Fast Facts:** *The average American consumes 130 lbs. of fat per year. This amount of fat would be equal to eating more than one full stick of butter each day.*

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