



Health Yourself Byte



CHOLESTEROL FRIENDS & ENEMIES

Lowering your cholesterol is a large part of improving heart health. We have “Friends” and “Enemies” when it comes to heart healthy meals.

- **Enemies**

Avoiding or significantly reducing saturated fats and trans fat in your food may help lower your cholesterol.

- **Saturated Fats**

Saturated fats are found in animal-based foods, including meats, butter and whole milk dairy products. It is also found in high-fat plant foods such as palm and coconut oils. The American Heart Association recommends lowering saturated fat intake to less than 10 percent of total calories and less than seven percent if cholesterol levels are elevated.

- **Trans Fats**

There is no healthy amount of trans fats. Trans fats are developed in a laboratory to improve the shelf life of processed foods found in many packaged baked goods, chips, fried foods, fast foods and most stick margarines. When reading labels look for trans fats on food labels as well as “hydrogenated oils.”

- **Friends**

Good foods to choose that may help reduce cholesterol are soluble fiber, omega-3 fatty acids and monounsaturated fats.

- ✓ **Soluble Fiber** may help reduce cholesterol by trapping cholesterol then carrying it out of your body before it can be absorbed into your bloodstream.

- *Raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, pears and oranges* are great sources of soluble fiber.

- Choose the whole fruit over juices to benefit from their fiber content.

- *Oatmeal* is a soluble-rich grain that can be eaten in its natural form but can also be pulverized in a food processor to make oat flour.

- *Beans* and lentils are rich in soluble fiber and are a great low-fat replacement for animal protein. Beans can be added to soups, salads and burritos.

- ✓ **Omega-3** fatty acids are great for cardiovascular health. Heart-healthy fish oils are rich in omega-3 fatty acids which seem to reduce inflammation and high blood pressure, decrease triglycerides and raise HDL (good cholesterol).

- ✓ **Monounsaturated Fats** help lower total cholesterol level and may help raise HDL levels. Consider replacing some of the unhealthy fats with monounsaturated fats such as, *olive and canola oil, nuts and nut butters, avocado, olives and seeds.*

Healthy Low-Fat Blueberry (Or Chocolate Chip) Oatmeal Muffins

1 cup toasted quick cooking oats

1 cup skim milk

1 cup blueberries or 1 cup of choc chips

4 T unsweetened applesauce

2 t canola oil

2 egg whites

1 t vanilla

½ cup brown sugar

½ cup white pastry flour

½ cup whole wheat flour

¾ t baking powder

¼ t cinnamon

1. Toast oats in a dry saucepan over medium heat

2. Soak oats and milk in a bowl for 30 minutes

3. Add brown sugar, applesauce, and vanilla to oat mixture,

4. Whisk flours, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon

5. Combine both mixtures. Add blueberries (or choc chips)

6. Scoop batter into greased muffin cups and bake 20-35 min cool 10 min before transferring to rack.



The Medical Center of Plano