

Overcoming the Cholesterol Problem – Naturally! By Peter Theobald, petert@itsecure.com

High cholesterol levels, all too common in India these days, especially amongst those in late thirties or early forties, are a serious health problem that can lead to heart attacks. Read on, to see how to eliminate this problem.. naturally.. in a matter of months!

Step 1 – Stop consuming all animal products (including milk and milk products)!

Let us first understand that cholesterol is a natural substance produced by our body, vital to its functioning and present in every cell! In fact every animal produces all the cholesterol it needs..this is not the problem. The issue is the outside cholesterol we ingest in our diet. So, where does dietary cholesterol come from? As mentioned above, only animals make cholesterol, so all animal products contain it .. ie all meat, fish, eggs, milk, etc have cholesterol. Plant products – in their natural form - (fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains and seeds) do NOT contain ANY cholesterol !! So the first step is to stop all NON-VEG foods.including milk and milk products -like curd, butter, ghee, lassi, paneer, cheese, etc. Once you stop adding further cholesterol to your body, it slowly manages to decrease your cholesterol levels to acceptable values. *Note: Pl take Vitamin B12 supplements if you do this step*

Step 2 – Stop consuming Processed Food/Deep Fried food

These contain trans fats which increase levels of “bad” (LDL) cholesterol and reduce levels of “good” (HDL) cholesterol. Transfats are found in **(a) Dalda** – partially hydrogenated vegetable oil. Most of us do not use Dalda for cooking in homes any more, but restaurants use it all the time! So stop consuming deep fried food / oily food in restaurants and even at home. **(b) Fast food, snack food, fried food and baked goods** usually have substantial amount of transfats in them. In short, avoid all processed food – i.e. anything that comes in a can, jar, packet or bottle. Read the label! If it has the words, “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” - that means it has transfats. Put it back on the shelf!

Step 3 - Eat your fruits and veggies!

These are full of vitamins, minerals, fibre and all the good things of life, and they help clean up your body not just of cholesterol but other toxins as well. Try having a large raw salad with every meal, and have lots of fresh fruits for breakfast and snacks.

Step 4 – Get some exercise! Preferably outdoors, in sunshine and fresh air

Regular physical activity increases good cholesterol, lowers your risk of heart disease, helps control weight, diabetes, and high BP. It raises your heart and breathing rates, conditioning your heart and lungs..**Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for heart disease.** If you are not physically fit, start with a 10 or 15 minute walk. Slowly increase the time to 30-45 minutes. The walk should be brisk .. not loitering around... Jogging, swimming etc are also OK but don't overdo it.. no aches and pains, please!

Step 5 - Stop smoking and minimise or eliminate drinking alcohol

References

Only animal products contain cholesterol, plant products dont - we make all the cholesterol we need AND Benefits of Exercise – American Heart Organisation - <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4488>

Transfats- New England Journal of Medicine - “from a nutritional standpoint, the consumption of trans fatty acids results in considerable potential harm but no apparent benefit.” - Mozaffarian , Katan, Ascherio, Stampfer, Willett WC (April 2006). "Trans Fatty Acids and Cardiovascular Disease". NEJM 354 (15): 1601-1613. PMID 16611951

Disclaimer: This note is prepared for informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for qualified medical opinion. Pl do NOT discontinue any medication or begin an exercise program without consulting with your doctor first.