Healthy Heart Cholesterol Management

Has your doctor told you that your cholesterol is up or that you need to look after your heart?

If the answer is yes, you are not alone. Many Australians have elevated cholesterol levels and will have to re-examine the way they eat to help control it. Together with the advice given by your doctor or dietitian, why not give fibre a try... it's easier than you think.

What's fibre got to do with cholesterol?

There are some types of fibre that lower blood cholesterol to help to protect your heart. In fact, every 10g of fibre you eat can reduce your risk of developing heart disease by 10%.[1-2] So it's worth considering your daily fibre intake.

How much fibre do I need?

25–30 grams per day

How much fibre is in common foods?

1 medium apple	3 g
1 cup broccoli	3 g
½ cup high fibre bran cereal	13 g
2 slices wholemeal bread	4 g
1 bowl oats	4 g
½ cup lentils	4 g
Handful of almonds	2 g

30 grams sounds like a lot, how can I do it?

It's actually easy. Fibre comes from plant foods, so having a few more of these will do the trick.

Getting a balance of fibres from vegetables, fruit, grains, nuts, seeds and legumes (that's beans and chickpeas) or pulses (lentils) is the perfect way to get all the benefits.

Why do I need a balance of fibres? Can't I just focus on one?

All plant foods contain a combination of different fibres and there are three main types:

Soluble fibre: helps to control cholesterol and blood sugar levels. You find this type in fruit, vegetables and grains such as oats and barley. It can also be found in psyllium, legumes and seeds.

Insoluble fibre: these fibres move all the way down to the colon where they help to make your stool heavier and easier to pass. In other words, they help you go to the toilet. You find this type in the bran of grains and in fruit and vegetable skins.

Fermentable fibre: these fibres feed all the little bugs in the intestine, which helps to keep a balanced digestive system and produce compounds that protect your bowel. You find this type of fibre in legumes (beans and chickpeas), cooked cold potatoes, rice, cereal grains and onions.

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How do I achieve good fibre balance?

Try to have these every day and you will have the balance just right.

- **2** serves of whole fruit, preferably with skin
- **5** serves of vegetables
- **4-6** serves of grains, preferably high fibre or whole grain
- **1** serve of nuts or legumes

Eat the above, together with a diet containing lean protein, some dairy and healthy fats.

1 serve = 1 medium banana, ½ cup berries, 1 medium apple

1 serve = ½ cup of cooked vegetables, 1 cup of salad greens, 1 medium carrot

1 serve = ½ cup cooked porridge, ⅔ cup of breakfast cereal, ½ cup brown rice, 1 slice wholemeal bread

1 serve = ½ cup cooked legumes, small handful of nuts

Did you know that grain fibre significantly reduces the risk of heart disease?

All the fibres are great, but did you know that grain fibres are very effective for lowering cholesterol and helping to protect your heart. That's right, grains contain soluble fibre that helps to lower cholesterol levels.[3]

Oats and barley, especially, contain high levels of a soluble fibre called beta-glucan that is proven to lower cholesterol. Psyllium is also very effective for lowering cholesterol levels.

So go with the **grain** every day.

Which grain foods contain soluble fibre to help with blood sugar control?

- Breakfast cereals containing whole grains such as oats and barley
- Breakfast cereals containing psyllium
- Oat porridge
- Muesli
- Cluster and granola products
- Whole grain crackers
- Wild rice
- Barley
- Millet

Other sources of soluble fibre are...

Beans, lentils | Soybeans (edamame) | Vegetables such as sweet potatoes, broccoli, carrots | Fruits such as apple, pear, banana | Almonds and flax seeds

1 Pereira et al. Arch. Intern. Med. 2004; 164(4): 370-6.
2 Johnsen et al. Br J Nutr 2015; 114(4): 608-23.
3 Whitehead et al. Am J Clin Nutr 2014; 100(6): 1413-21.

These fact sheets are not meant to replace dietary advice provided by your doctor or dietitian. Please consult with your doctor or dietitian before making changes to your diet or physical activity routine.

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