

The **HIGHS** and lows of *Cholesterol*

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I am often asked many questions about cholesterol and triglycerides. Just what are they exactly and what they do?

Well, simply put, cholesterol is a soft, waxy like substance that is found among the lipids (fats) in the bloodstream and all your body's cells. Cholesterol is important for good health helping to form cell membranes and certain hormones and is needed for other important functions such as the formation of fat-soluble vitamins including Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Vitamin E, and Vitamin K.

Triglycerides are the chemical form in which most fat exists in food as well as in the body. They are also present in the blood plasma and associated with cholesterol. Triglycerides are essential for producing energy.

So what is the common word you see in both definitions? Yes, that's right it, is that big ugly word we all despise... "FAT."

We need cholesterol and triglycerides in our bodies to remain healthy, but like any other thing too much can be bad. Calories that are consumed but not used immediately are converted into triglycerides and stored in the fat cells until the body needs energy. While cholesterol is used for cellular formation. Too much of either can result in coronary artery disease, diabetes, heart disease among other health conditions.

Medication has often been prescribed to treat both conditions. But

they can also be controlled, and even reduced, by the foods you eat. Fruits and vegetables can be very instrumental in the treatment of cholesterol and triglyceride elevation. Under the new guidelines from the FDA the old "Five-a-day" rule may not be enough.

September is *Fruits and Vegetables - More Matters* month. Adults need anywhere from 7 to 13 cups of fruits and vegetables daily to get the health benefits. Additionally, adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet can give you protection against obesity, heart disease, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

Fruits and vegetables could be the miracle we have all looked for. Lose weight, reduce cholesterol, increase circulation, lower blood pressure, etc. The benefits are endless.

Here are some easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables in your diet:

- ♥ Drink 100% fruit juice instead of fruit-flavored drinks.
- ♥ Whole and cut-up fruit add fiber.
- ♥ Use pureed vegetables to thicken soups, stews, gravies and casseroles.
- ♥ Grill fruits and vegetables to make them sweeter and more delicious.
- ♥ Flavor vegetables with fresh or dried herbs to keep the vitamins.
- ♥ Have a vegetarian meal at least once a week.
- ♥ Decorate your plate with edible garnishes like cucumber twist, red pepper strips, or lemon slices

♥ Make sure your plate has lots of color...green, red, yellow, orange, blue, etc.

I encourage you to take these easy, first steps to healthier eating. As always, before making any changes to your diet or exercise routine, it's best to check with your doctor first!

Dawn Davis, our Health/Wellness and Program Manager, is a Certified Master Trainer and Senior Fitness Instructor with special certifications in a variety of special programs including Yoga, Tai chi, Pilates and Zumba Gold.

alzheimer's association

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October 2, 2010

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Call Dawn Davis at 770-461-0813
for information and a team application.
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Registration 8:00 a.m.—9:30 a.m.
Run 9:15 a.m. Walk 9:30 a.m.

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