

Managing blood cholesterol and triglycerides



Heart and blood vessel disease is ten times more common among transplant recipients than in people without a transplant. The risk is increased if you have high blood cholesterol (especially LDL-cholesterol) and/or high triglycerides.

Blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels can be controlled by maintaining a healthy weight and making good food and lifestyle choices.

Food choices to lower your cholesterol and triglycerides

- **Limit the total amount of fat you eat**, which will help you control your body weight.
- **Limit foods rich in saturated fat and avoid *trans*- fats**, both of which increase blood cholesterol levels.
- **Eat in moderation foods rich in monounsaturated fats** (which may help increase HDL (good) cholesterol).
- **Eat in moderation foods rich in polyunsaturated fats**, particularly good sources of **omega-3 fats** (which may help lower triglyceride levels).
- **Include good sources of vitamin E**. Nuts, seeds and vegetable oils are among the best sources of vitamin E.
- **Eat wholegrain products**, such as wholegrain bread, high fibre breakfast cereals (eg. muesli, bran, oats).
- **Cut back on sugar and sugary foods**. These foods can cause increased triglyceride levels.
- **Include plant foods which are naturally rich in phytosterols**, such as legumes and nuts. You may be advised to eat 2-3 servings of phytosterol-enriched food products.

Healthy eating tips

- Minimise the oil you use in cooking.
- Remove the fat from meat and skin from chicken before cooking.
- Eat fish, fresh or canned, a few times per week.
- Eat legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas).
- Choose low fat dairy products.
- Have a small handful of nuts and seeds each day.
- Base your meals around wholegrain cereals, vegetables and fruit.

Lifestyle choices to lower your cholesterol and triglycerides

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Be active. Regular physical activity can reduce triglyceride levels in your blood and burn kilojoules. Aim for at least 30 min of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week.
- Do not smoke.
- Limit alcohol consumption to no more than 2 standard drinks per day (both men and women).



Where's the fat in food?

Monounsaturated fats

(Consume in moderation regularly)

Nuts (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pistachios)
Seeds
Olive oil
Rice bran oil
Avocado
Eggs

Polyunsaturated fats

(Consume in moderation regularly)

Nuts (walnuts*, Brazils, pine nuts)
Flaxseeds (linseeds)*
Fish (salmon*, tuna*, sardines*)
Seafood
Lean meat
Eggs (enriched with omega-3)*

*Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Saturated fats (Limit)

Fatty meat, chicken with skin
Full fat milk and dairy products eg. yoghurt, cheese, butter, cream
Lard, dripping
Coconut cream and milk, coconut oil, copha, palm oil, cocoa butter

Trans-fat (Avoid)

Hydrogenated vegetable oils found in margarine, snack foods, commercial cakes and biscuits

This fact sheet is based on the *Evidence-based Guidelines for the Nutritional Management of Adult Kidney Transplant Recipients*, developed with funding from the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (formerly GMCT). The information has been independently reviewed by the Dietitians Association of Australia. For expert nutrition and dietary advice contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian. Visit 'Find an Accredited Practising Dietitian' at www.daa.asn.au or call 1800 812 942.