



## 2021 January Wellness Tip: Happy New Year - What's One Really Important Topic to Everyone's Health? Open this Email to Find Out!

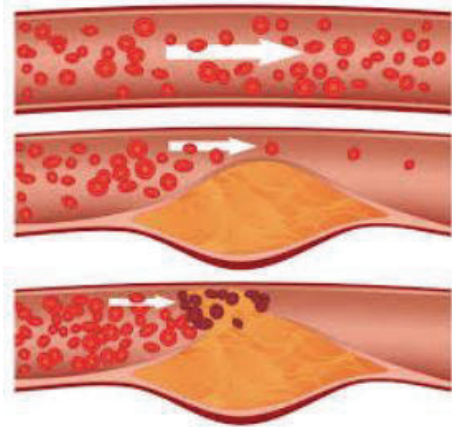
Colleagues,

Happy New Year! We hope it is a year of health and happiness for you and your loved ones. As we start the new year, here are some tips for better health. We hope you find them helpful.

### The Benefits Administration Team

For our January 2021 Wellness Tip we selected a topic that is so important to everyone's overall health and well-being - [what can we do to keep our cholesterol low?](#) You may also ask [why is it important to lower your cholesterol?](#)

- Increased cholesterol levels lead to a higher risk of heart attacks and strokes which are debilitating and can lead to death
- Cholesterol is divided into "good" cholesterol and "bad" cholesterol.
  - "Bad" cholesterol, LDL, often deposits cholesterol in blood vessels leading to blood flow blockages.
  - "Good" cholesterol, HDL, helps bring cholesterol away from the blood vessel wall.
  - A total cholesterol under 200 with an LDL under 130 is a general goal.
  - Your doctor may set lower goals depending on other health problems.
  - HDL averages between 45-55 with a higher number being better.



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## 5 Ways To Keep Cholesterol Low

People who have high cholesterol have an increased risk of heart disease and heart attack. If you need to lower your cholesterol, it's important to make certain lifestyle changes. By following the following five (5) tips, you may even be able to: (1) avoid cholesterol medication;

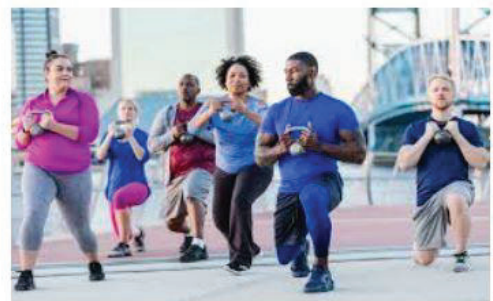
(2) stop taking cholesterol medication; or (3) find that your medication works better than before.

## 1. Eat Foods That Are Good For Your Heart

Even if you've been eating unhealthy for years, **making certain changes to your diet can lower your cholesterol** and improve the health of your heart. Getting rid of trans fats and eating more healthy fats is a good start. Saturated fats, like the ones you find in red meat and dairy products, will raise your cholesterol. However, lean cuts of meat, low-fat dairy and olive oil have healthy fat that improve heart health.



It's also good to eat foods that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which do not affect LDL cholesterol. These foods are good for your heart and increase HDL, which is your good cholesterol. Salmon, herring and mackerel are all packed with omega-3 fatty acids, as are flaxseeds, walnuts and almonds. People with high cholesterol should also eat more soluble fiber, which is found in oats, oat bran, fruits, lentils, beans and vegetables.



## 2. Exercise Daily \* (regarding the photos above social distance, exercise outdoors, and wear a mask of course)

Whether or not you're currently exercising, you should **increase the amount that you exercise** and workout most days per week. Exercise has been known to improve cholesterol,



even if you just workout at a moderate intensity. Physical activity raises HDL cholesterol and it's recommended that you workout for at least 30 minutes every day. If you don't want to workout for a full 30 minutes, add three (3) sets of ten (10) minutes each.

If you're not used to working out, it's important to find an exercise that you enjoy. Take a walk during your lunch break, ride your bike or sport you can do while safely social distancing. If you're having trouble staying motivated, join a Zoom exercise group. Remember, even something as simple as taking the stairs instead of an elevator (while socially distancing) is beneficial.

### 3. Get a Handle On Your Vices

If you're a smoker, this is a perfect opportunity to finally quit. Not only will quitting smoking improve your HDL cholesterol level, but it comes with a host of other perks. After just 20 minutes following your last cigarette, your heart rate and blood pressure will both decrease. Within one (1) year, your risk of heart disease will be 50% less. Within 15 years, your risk of heart disease will be as low as a non-smoker's.

Drinking a moderate amount of alcohol may improve your HDL levels, but that's not a good reason to start drinking if you don't currently drink. If you do currently drink alcohol, make sure to only drink it in moderation. For adults, that means one (1) drink per day for women and for men who are over the age of 65, and two (2) drinks for men who are under the age of 65.

### 4. Lose Weight



If you carry any extra weight, it could be contributing to your high cholesterol. Even losing just five percent of your weight may improve your cholesterol level. Take a good look at your daily routine, your eating habits and your workout plan. Make the changes necessary to lose between five and ten percent of your weight.

When it comes to losing weight, you don't need to do a major overhaul all at once. **Small changes can really add up.** For example, if you eat a lot when you're frustrated, try taking a walk instead. If you mindlessly snack on chips when working, reach for carrot sticks instead.



## 5. Lower Your Stress Levels

Stress plays a big role in cholesterol. The more stressed out you are, the more likely it is that your cholesterol will skyrocket. In order to normalize it, it's important to **de-stress and to get rid of any anxiety that's plaguing you**. There are a lot of ways to naturally relax.

Some people find exercise relaxing while others need to veg out on the couch. Read a good book while sipping a cup of tea or go for a brisk walk and think about what is bothering you. You may need to try a few things to figure out what helps you relax.

**Source:** [https://results.healthprep.com/topic/322/?utm\\_campaign=tm8Y842&g\\_ci=23846816316710215&g\\_ai=23846816316790215&g\\_adi=23846816317870215&ekw=0cH%2Bzk3NMKwF8QFHrvPPPVRyftu%2FILC%2FwFOp8CTeTXU%3D&fbclid=IwAR0a1i-rnt9\\_p1n7DRnJpEip\\_906HxdmV7uWF4pFccLdvjP2AL8-BrC81Gc](https://results.healthprep.com/topic/322/?utm_campaign=tm8Y842&g_ci=23846816316710215&g_ai=23846816316790215&g_adi=23846816317870215&ekw=0cH%2Bzk3NMKwF8QFHrvPPPVRyftu%2FILC%2FwFOp8CTeTXU%3D&fbclid=IwAR0a1i-rnt9_p1n7DRnJpEip_906HxdmV7uWF4pFccLdvjP2AL8-BrC81Gc)

Let's make 2021 a year where we do something in our best interest and lower our cholesterol with these ideas above. We look forward to sharing tips throughout the year for your benefit. We wish you a new year of health and happiness.

