

## Lower Your Lipids

Lipids are fats and fatlike compounds. They play vital roles in the body. But they can sometimes cause harm as well.

When doctors measure your lipid levels, they measure the lipids that reflect your risk of getting heart and blood vessel problems. These lipids include:

- LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- Triglycerides

### Lipid Goals

The American Diabetes Association sets goals for people with diabetes. LDL cholesterol should be less than 100 mg/dl. HDL cholesterol should be above 40 mg/dl. Triglycerides should be below 150 mg/dl.

Unhealthy lipid levels make heart attacks and strokes more likely. When a lipid level falls outside the healthy range, you and your health care professional should take action.

### Meeting Lipid Goals

Several drugs improve lipid levels. But healthy lifestyle

changes are vital. The government’s National Cholesterol Education Program suggests the three-part Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) plan.

Part one is to lose weight if you are overweight.

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Part two is to eat a heart-healthy meal plan. The TLC diet focuses on cutting cholesterol and saturated fat. These cause high LDL cholesterol levels.

How does the TLC diet work in real life? Each day you eat:

- Six or more servings of breads and cereals (especially whole grains),

pasta, rice, potatoes, and dry beans and peas

- Three to five servings of vegetables without added fat, sauce, or salt
- Two to four servings of fruit
- Two to three servings of nonfat and low-fat dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, or cheese
- Five or fewer ounces of fish, skinless poultry, or lean cuts of other meats
- Seeds, nuts, salad dressings, unsaturated oils, and soft or liquid margarine or vegetable oil spread in an amount that stays within your daily calorie goal

The TLC diet suggests choosing less-healthy foods only every now and then. These include baked goods (such as doughnuts, biscuits, and cookies), grain-based snacks (such as chips), fried or sauced vegetables, whole and 2 percent milk, ice cream, full-fat cheese and yogurt, egg yolks, higher-fat meats

(such as bacon, sausage, ribs, and fried poultry and fish), butter, shortening, chocolate, and coconut. The fewer times you eat these types of food each week, the better.

Part three of the TLC program is to boost your physical activity. One way is to be more active in your daily life. For example:

- Walk or bike to work if possible.
- Park your car farther away from where you are going and walk from there.

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Rake leaves or work in the garden.
- Clean the house.
- Take a short brisk walk during your lunch break.
- Hide the TV remote.
- Commercial-size. Walk around the room or do chair exercises during TV commercials.
- Walk while talking on the phone.

You can also set aside time to exercise:

- Walk.

- Jog.
  - Bicycle or use an exercise bicycle.
  - Swim or do water aerobics.
- Choose active pastimes:
- Golf (without a motorized cart).
  - Canoe.
  - Volunteer at a hospital, humane society, or park.
  - Dance.

The TLC program can lower your lipid levels and help you have a longer, happier life.

### Resources

For more information, visit these Web sites:

- American Heart Association: <http://www.americanheart.org>
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's Heart and Vascular Diseases page: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm>
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases' Weight Loss and Control page: <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/nutrit.htm>
- The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports: <http://www.fitness.gov/>
- Nutrition information and recipes from the American Diabetes Association: <http://www.diabetes.org/nutrition-and-recipes/nutrition/overview.jsp>
- Weight loss and exercise information from the American Diabetes Association: <http://www.diabetes.org/weightloss-and-exercise.jsp>

