

SUPPORTING YOUR HEALTH HOLISTICALLY

High cholesterol isn't solely driven by diet—factors like genetics, hormones, stress, and lifestyle all play a role. Instead of focusing on weight, a heart-healthy approach means making small, lasting changes, like adding more plant-based foods, staying active, managing stress, and getting personalized support from a registered dietitian!

UNDERSTANDING CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a fatty substance essential for your body. It is transported by lipoproteins:

- **LDL (Low-Density Lipoprotein):** Is often called "bad cholesterol". High levels can lead to plaque buildup in arteries.
- **HDL (High-Density Lipoprotein):** Also known as "good cholesterol," helps remove excess cholesterol from the bloodstream.

HEART HEALTHY EATING PATTERNS

1. Mediterranean Diet:

- Rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, and olive oil.
- Includes moderate fish, poultry, and dairy, with limited red meat.
- Benefits: Reduces LDL and improves HDL.

2. Portfolio Diet:

- Emphasizes soluble fiber, nuts, plant sterols, and soy protein.
- Benefits: Lowers LDL significantly when combined with consistent adherence.

3. DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension):

- Focuses on vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy, and whole grains.
- Limits added sugars and sodium.
- Benefits: Improves cholesterol and blood pressure.

KEY NUTRITIONAL STRATEGIES

HEALTHY FATS	Replace saturated fats with unsaturated fats: Use olive, canola, or avocado oils instead of butter or lard. Snack on nuts or seeds instead of processed snacks. Include fatty fish (e.g., salmon, sardines) for omega-3s.
SOLUBLE FIBER	Sources: Oats, barley, beans, lentils, fruits (e.g., apples, pears), and vegetables (e.g., carrots, sweet potatoes). Benefits: Soluble fiber binds to cholesterol in the gut, helping to lower LDL.
PLANT-BASED PROTEIN	Sources: Tofu, soy milk, beans, lentils, and edamame in meals. Benefits: Soy protein can help lower LDL cholesterol.
ANTIOXIDANTS	Focus on brightly colored vegetables and fruits (e.g., spinach, berries, sweet potatoes). Benefits: Antioxidants reduce oxidative stress and inflammation linked to cardiovascular risk.

LIFESTYLE PRACTICES

Manage Stress: Chronic stress can negatively impact cholesterol and heart health. Engage in mindfulness, meditation, or breathing exercises to reduce stress.	Physical Activity: Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity (e.g., brisk walking, cycling) per week. Include resistance training twice weekly to improve lipid profiles.
Limit Alcohol: Excessive alcohol raises triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood) and increases heart disease risk. Drinking less is better for your health.	Quit Smoking: Stopping smoking can improve HDL levels and reduce overall cardiovascular risk.
THINGS TO CONSIDER	Hormonal Influences: Hormonal changes (e.g., menopause) can affect cholesterol. Speak with your healthcare provider about tailored approaches.
	Genetics: Family history plays a role in cholesterol levels. Even with a healthy lifestyle, some individuals may need medications.
	Household Food Insecurity: Accessible, nutrient-dense foods like lentils, beans, and frozen fruits and vegetables can support heart health on a budget. Consult your local community for additional resources.

CAYA HEALTH NUTRITION SERVICES

SEE A DIETITIAN TODAY!

It's completely normal to feel overwhelmed with all of this information and we know changing habits is hard! We acknowledge that seeing cholesterol levels that are out of range on blood work can trigger health anxiety for some folks. Our dietitians are here to help. At CAYA Health Centre, our dietitians can provide personalized, evidence-based guidance to help you improve your cholesterol while enjoying the foods you love.

Whether you want to lower LDL or build heart-healthy habits, we're here to support you with practical, sustainable solutions.

And we promise - you can still incorporate your favorite foods! Book a FREE 15 minute consultation today and see how a dietitian can help work with you to improve your health.

BOOK AN APPOINTMENT!

In-person appointments in Vancouver and virtual appointments across British Columbia.

Finding the right fit is important. All of our dietitians offer an initial free 15-minute consultation.

