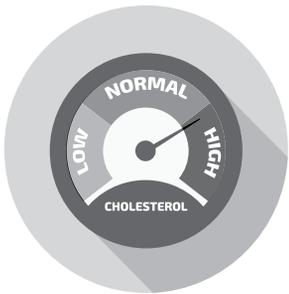


A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA



A CLOSER LOOK AT CHOLESTEROL

When your blood cholesterol is tested, you will see a total cholesterol reading, as well as individual readouts on the following:

LDL CHOLESTEROL

LDL cholesterol is considered the “bad” cholesterol because it contributes to plaque, which is a thick, hard deposit that can clog arteries and make them less flexible. Ideally, you want your LDL less than 100 mg/dL. An LDL above 190 is considered very high.

HDL CHOLESTEROL

HDL is considered “good” cholesterol because it helps remove LDL cholesterol from the arteries. An HDL level of 60 mg/dL or higher is considered to be protective against heart disease. Anything lower than 40 puts you at an increased risk of heart disease.

TRIGLYCERIDES

Triglycerides are another type of fat, and they’re used to store excess energy from your diet. High levels of triglycerides in the blood are associated with atherosclerosis. A triglyceride reading below 150 is considered ideal.

A New Stance on Dietary Cholesterol

What You Need to Know

In the past, you may have read or even heard from your doctor to limit your dietary cholesterol. That advice is now changing. In the U.S. government’s 2015-2020 “New Dietary Guidelines for Americans” the limit on cholesterol has been removed. Previously, American adults were advised to limit cholesterol in their diet to 300 milligrams a day, which is about the equivalent of two eggs.

Why has the limit been removed?

A good amount of scientific research suggests that there isn’t a strong connection between dietary cholesterol and blood cholesterol. In fact, the cholesterol in your diet is only responsible for a small fraction

of your total blood cholesterol.

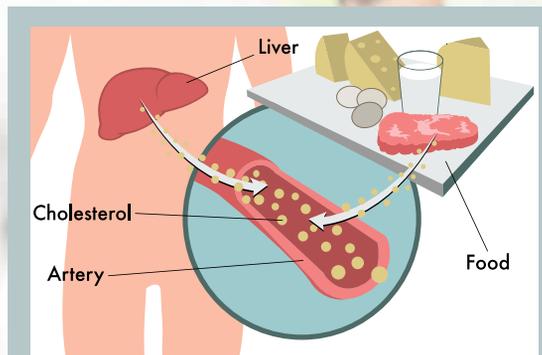
Your body naturally produces most cholesterol on its own. Other factors that contribute to blood cholesterol levels include smoking, obesity, physical activity, age, family history and even certain medications. So, all of these elements must be taken into account when it comes to maintaining healthy blood cholesterol.

Does this mean I can eat whatever I want?

No, of course not! The new Dietary Guidelines stress moderation and advise that individuals should still aim to limit or avoid saturated fats and trans fats (i.e., fatty meats, fast food and high-fat dairy products, which all contain cholesterol). Research shows that your liver

produces more cholesterol when you eat a diet high in saturated and trans fats. Animal proteins such as meat, dairy, fish and eggs all contain cholesterol and typically have no fiber. It is important to eat animal proteins in moderation to avoid a negative impact on your blood cholesterol. Exercise also helps to keep blood cholesterol in a healthy range.

Experts recommend that adults get their blood cholesterol tested at least once every four to six years. Talk to your doctor about your cholesterol level and follow their recommendations.



WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that helps your body make hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help you digest food. Your body, and especially your liver, makes all the cholesterol you need and circulates it through the blood.



Miraculous Muffins

MIRACULOUS MUFFINS FOR LOWERING CHOLESTEROL

This recipe features some of the very best foods for lowering cholesterol in one delicious breakfast muffin.

INGREDIENTS:

2 ¼ cups oat bran hot cereal, uncooked

¼ cup chopped pistachios or nuts of choice (a bit more if you like)

¼ cup chopped dried apricots

2 ½ tsp baking powder

¼ cup brown sugar, honey, or molasses

1 ¼ cups plain soy milk

2 omega 3 eggs, beaten

3 Tbsp canola oil

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 425° F. In a large bowl combine the oat bran, nuts, apricots, and baking powder. Stir in the sugar or other sweetening. Mix the milk, eggs, and oil together and blend in with the oat bran mixture. Line muffin pan with paper baking cups, and fill with batter. Bake 15 to 17 minutes. Test for doneness with a toothpick; it should come out moist but not wet.

SERVES: 12 muffins



Dr. Ann
WELLNESS

With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit DrAnnWellness.com.

WHOLE GRAINS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Over the past two decades whole grains have garnered a sparkling reputation for broad-spectrum disease protection. In one of the largest review studies to date that focused on whole grain intake and the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity, the results were telling. People who consumed the most whole grains or cereal fiber were 18 to 40 percent less likely to get type 2 diabetes and 14 to 26 percent less likely to get heart disease vs. those consuming the least. Consuming fiber-rich whole grains was also associated with a healthier body weight.

Whole grains offer a treasure trove of nutrients including generous amounts of fiber, the secret weapon for metabolic health. For best results, choose physically intact, whole kernel whole grains like oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, etc. or high fiber cereals as your top choice.

Pasta POWER

HOW TO GIVE THIS STAPLE DISH A NUTRITIONAL UPGRADE



It's estimated that the average person eats about 20 pounds of pasta each year. This high number is largely due to pasta being an easy, quick, delicious and affordable dinner for many of us. But we often hear pasta being referred to as a "sinful" food or a meal that will wreck our waistlines. So what's so bad about pasta?

Most pastas you see on your grocer's shelves are the refined, processed variety (although you may now start to see other, healthier options—more on that later). During the refining process, the nutrient-rich outer bran shell and inner germ layer are removed from the grain. This process strips the wheat of much of its fiber, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, leaving you with an almost nutritionally defunct product. Further, refined carbohydrates like white pasta are less satisfying than their whole wheat counterparts. This is in part because your body absorbs processed grains relatively quickly, so an hour or two later you may feel hungry again. They also contain less fiber and protein, which both help to keep you satisfied.

Luckily, there are some pasta options and swaps that will leave you feeling satisfied while also packing a nutritional punch (unlike the added empty calories found in white pasta).

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE PASTA AISLE

When you toss pasta into your grocery cart, make sure you're grabbing a whole grain variety. A 100 percent whole grain pasta means that all three components of the wheat kernel (the bran, germ and endosperm) are included. Since nothing is stripped during processing, whole grain pastas offer healthy doses of fiber, vitamins and minerals.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF A PASTA IS 100 PERCENT WHOLE GRAIN

Look for the word "whole" on the ingredients list. All grains and flours should be preceded by the word "whole."

Ensure the front of the package states "100 percent whole grain" or "100 percent whole wheat."

Make sure you specifically see "100 percent" on the label. And keep in mind that even something labeled as 100 percent whole grain doesn't mean that it contains only whole grains. The product could also contain sugar, malt syrup, and invert sugar—not exactly what you'd call wholesome ingredients.

Look for products that contain the yellow whole grain stamp.

The whole grain stamp is used on foods that contain at least half a serving (8 grams) of whole grains. The black and yellow stamp lists the number of grams of whole grain per serving, and if all of the grain is whole grain, the stamp also includes a "100% banner."



You may also notice some unique alternatives like pastas made from quinoa, beans or rice—these are also healthy options (be sure to read the labels of course). You may also want to try making your own. With a handy kitchen tool called a spiralizer (available at most home and kitchen retailers or online) you can make noodles out of veggies like zucchini and squash. Toss with some olive oil and your favorite toppings and you have one healthy "pasta" dish.



Regularly choosing whole grains over the refined type is associated with numerous health benefits, including lower blood pressure and reduced risk of many chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease.





16 SIMPLE WAYS TO STAY HEALTHY THIS COLD & FLU SEASON



FACT OR FICTION?

Q: Can your toothbrush or lip balm re-infect you after you've been sick?

A: It's unlikely. Once you've had a particular viral illness, you're protected from it. It's still a good idea to replace your toothbrush every two to three months though.

1. Go outside (yes, even if it's cold!) to get some daily fresh air.

Experts note that one reason we get sick when it's colder is because we're sharing more inside (often contaminated) air. It's simply a myth that cold air will make you sick. Quite the contrary in fact—so bundle up and spend some time outside!

2. Track spikes with online tools. Flu season generally begins in November and peaks in February.

Your local city or town may experience spikes or lulls in flu activity and you can get in the know by using online tools like the CDC's flu tracker:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm>

3. Keep your nails short and clean them.

Dirt and germs get trapped underneath your nails and are then released over the course of the day as you touch things (like your face) and move around. Keeping your nails short and taking extra care to

keep them clean helps ensure you're not harboring harmful germs.

4. Hold your breath if you see or hear someone sneeze nearby.

A recent study from MIT revealed that coughs and sneezes travel much farther distances than previously thought. You can help prevent these infectious substances from entering your body by simply holding your breath for 10 to 15 seconds when someone sneezes or coughs.

5. Buy a value-pack of pens. Pens you use at the bank or to sign a restaurant check have likely been touched by hundreds of people who may have left nasty germs behind. Having your own, clean pen handy at all times can reduce your chances of picking up a virus this season.

6. Eat fish a few times a week. Oily fish like salmon and sardines are great sources of vitamin D, and a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* found that people with low levels of this vitamin are more susceptible to colds.

7. If you drink alcohol, keep it to no more than one a day for women, and no more than two for men. Studies have shown that excessive alcohol suppresses the immune system by reducing the ability of white blood cells to effectively kill bacteria.

8. Don't mindlessly pop cold pills. Several over the counter (OTC) medications can help relieve cold and flu symptoms, but don't take them without reading the warning and dose information on the package. Some medications can interfere with prescription drugs, while others are only meant to be taken for a few days. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about an OTC med.

9. Stay home from work when you first feel ill. It's likely that you'll get your co-workers sick if you "brave it" into the office. Plus, not taking the time to rest and take care of yourself could slow your recovery.

10. Get some movement every day. Exercising is key to preventing illness because it keeps your immune system strong and healthy. Most experts recommend 30 minutes of moderate activity (like brisk walking) a day. Remember that you can break activity up throughout the day and any type of movement is better than none!

11. Wipe off your smart phone. You are constantly touching it and then placing it on your face when you use it to talk. Use a disinfectant wipe to clean it daily and while you're at it do the same with items like

your refrigerator, keyboard, doorknobs, light switches and remote controls.

12. Hang out with a group of friends. Researchers from Carnegie Mellon gave 83 college freshmen a flu vaccine and found that those with larger social networks produced more flu-fighting antibodies than those who hung out in smaller groups. Students who reported feeling lonely also produced fewer antibodies.

13. Use a humidifier in your home. The flu virus can survive and is more likely to spread in dry, low-humidity conditions (which are often the conditions during winter). A humidifier can help fight the spread of most viruses.

14. Get a flu shot every year. It's usually free or very inexpensive

through your insurance or employer and it only takes a minute. It's one of the best things you can do to protect yourself and your family from the flu virus.

15. Stay nourished. A healthy, nourishing diet is more important than ever if you're sick or are just trying to keep from getting sick. A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that mice on a low-cal diet that were exposed to the flu virus took longer to recover and were more likely to suffer ill effects than those who were well-nourished.

16. Wash your hands often! Yes, it seems obvious, but many adults fail to do this. It's far and away the best known method for preventing infection.



Remember
 TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH.



STRIKING A CORD

Self-Care for Your Voice

Your vocal cords are built to withstand frequent use. You can likely talk throughout the day without feeling any strain or discomfort. But, if you're harsh on your cords, (i.e., screaming, singing, cheering and/or yelling forcefully) you can develop lesions that give your voice a raspy, low quality. You could also develop laryngitis if you overuse or irritate your vocal cords. Laryngitis is an inflammation of the voice box that causes your voice to become weak, raspy or hoarse (laryngitis can also be caused by a cold or the flu or acid reflux).

Self-Care for Your Cords

Fortunately, there's a lot you can do to protect and treat your vocal cords. Give a voice to these tips:

Give your voice a rest or speak quietly.

When you have to talk quietly, speak softly but don't whisper, as whispering irritates your larynx more than speaking softly.

Drink plenty of fluids. Drink water throughout the day. Aside from keeping your entire body hydrated, sipping water will thin out and flush away mucus and irritants. A warm cup of herbal tea can also help soothe your vocal cords.

Try not to clear your throat. It can inflame your throat and make mucus feel extra thin, triggering the need for you to clear your throat repeatedly.

Avoid menthol cough drops. Menthol and eucalyptus can actually irritate your throat's mucous membranes. If you need a cough drop, opt for ones that are made with glycerin or peptin.

Use a humidifier at home. It will add moisture, helping to prevent a dry, scratchy throat.

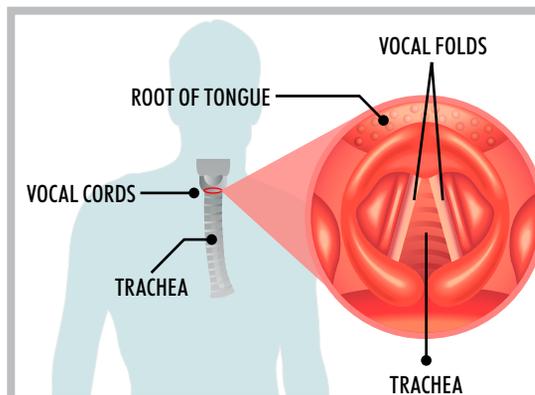
Avoid irritants like second-hand smoke. Pollutants like smoke irritate and cause your vocal cords to swell.



If you're suffering from sore vocal cords or laryngitis, you can usually treat the problem with self-care and the symptoms should ease in less than two weeks. You should make an appointment with a doctor if your symptoms don't ease or worsen after two weeks.

Seek immediate medical care if you:

- Have trouble breathing
- Cough up blood
- Have a fever that won't go away
- Have increasing pain
- Have trouble swallowing



WHAT MAKES UP YOUR VOICE?

Your vocal cords are made up of two bands of smooth muscle tissue covered in a mucous membrane. These cords vibrate as you breathe, and when you talk the vibrations create sound waves that travel through your nose, throat and mouth, producing the unique sound of your voice.

6 REALLY CONVINCING REASONS YOU MAY WANT TO PICK UP RUNNING

Many people mistakenly believe that running is only for the ultra-fit. This actually couldn't be further from the truth. Indeed, you can pick up running at any given moment (more in the column on this page as to how to start) and there's a lot of good science behind why you should do so:

1 » You'll likely live longer. In an *Archives of Internal Medicine* study, researchers followed about 1,000 adults (ages 50 and older) for 21 years. At the end of the study, 85 percent of the runners were still alive while only 66 percent of the non-runners were alive.

2 » It could protect your joints and strengthen your knees and bones (yes, you read that right). You may have had family or friends warn you that running is terrible for your knees. For people with healthy knees, that is not necessarily true. Running may increase bone mass, and even helps stem age-related bone loss. Further, studies show that running could improve knee health. Running appears to stimulate cartilage in an effort to repair minor damage. Experts believe that the impact of body weight when the foot hits the ground increases production of certain proteins in the cartilage that make it stronger.

3 » It will make you happy and more focused. A study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* proved that just 30 minutes of running during the week for three weeks boosted sleep quality, mood, and concentration during the day. Moreover, mounting research shows that when you run, your brain releases endocannabinoids, molecules that can make you feel happy. Runner's high is real!

4 » It's free! OK, you do need to invest in a good pair of running shoes, but other than that, you can run anywhere, (as long as it is a safe place) at any time, at no cost.

5 » It's a major calorie blaster. A one-hour run can burn upwards of 600 calories. Additionally, running can help blast belly fat. A study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that out of 100,000 runners those who ran 35 or more miles per week gained less weight in their bellies throughout their mid-life years than those who ran less than nine.

6 » It's a great way to bond with friends. Yes, running is a solo activity, but you can run alongside friends. And signing up for a fun run or 5k with a group of friends is a great way to keep each other accountable with your training and you can share and celebrate the feeling of accomplishment together after crossing the finish line!



HOW TO START A RUNNING REGIMEN

No doubt about it, you can easily become a runner or pick up running again if it's been a while (note: if you have any pre-existing conditions or health concerns, contact your healthcare provider before starting a running routine).

Here are some simple steps that will get you moving:

Lace up. All you really need is a good pair of running shoes. Visit your local sporting goods store and have an employee measure your feet. Ask for their recommendations, and remember that if the shoes feel even the slightest bit uncomfortable at the store they will feel worse when you start running.

Warm up. You want to ensure your muscles are loose and ready to run. Take three to 10 minutes to warm up with a brisk walk.

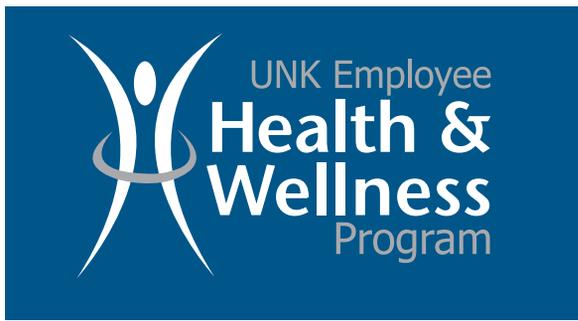
Start slow and add speed and distance gradually. Start at a pace that is comfortable to you. This usually means being able to run and carry on a conversation. If you're out of breath and having trouble getting out even a few words, you're going too fast. Run until you feel tired or a little uncomfortable. This could mean a few minutes or a few miles. Gradually add distance and intensity as you build endurance (this could take weeks, don't try to double your running distance in just a few days).

Cool down. Take three to 10 minutes to cool down with an easy walk and some light stretching.

Rest. For most beginners, it's usually not a good idea to run every day (to avoid soreness and injury). You can certainly work out in between your rest days though. Try cross-training, light weight training, swimming or brisk walking on your "rest" days.

Before starting any new physical activity regimen, always consult your physician.





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DID YOU KNOW?

20
POUNDS

IT'S ESTIMATED THAT THE AVERAGE PERSON EATS ABOUT **20 POUNDS OF PASTA** EACH YEAR.

300
MILLIGRAMS

PREVIOUSLY, AMERICANS WERE ADVISED TO LIMIT CHOLESTEROL IN THEIR DIET TO **300 MILLIGRAMS A DAY**. WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S 2015-2020 "NEW DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS" THE LIMIT ON DIETARY CHOLESTEROL HAS BEEN REMOVED.

Cholesterol

BY THE NUMBERS

Americans are making great strides with their cholesterol. Check out these stats from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

5.4%

Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of American adults with high total cholesterol decreased from **18.3%** to **12.9%**.

2%

The percentage of American adults with high LDL cholesterol (the "bad" kind) has dropped about **2%** since 2000.

69.4%

During 2009–2010, **69.4%** of Americans age 20 and older reported that they had their cholesterol checked within the last 5 years. Experts recommend that adults get their blood cholesterol tested at least once every four to six years.

WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?



BEST CHOICE

1
INGREDIENT

Number of ingredients you'll find in a package of brown rice or whole grain rolled oats. No processing means no hidden ingredients and more nutrition!



6+
INGREDIENTS

Most packaged white pastas will have around 6-9 ingredients on the list, including white flour, resistant corn starch and niacin.

WELCOA * Information is reviewed by a prestigious Medical Advisory Board comprised of physicians and health care professionals and is intended to help you make smart health decisions for yourself and your family. Although editorial content is based on sound medical information, we ask that you consult a health care professional for all matters of concern.

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