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# HEALTHY LIVING

Wellness Newsletter from ARISTAPOINT

## SEPTEMBER 2015

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# Cholesterol Screening

## Why it is Important to Have a Cholesterol Test

You see TV commercials, ads in magazines, and pamphlets lining your doctor's office walls - all touting the dangers of high cholesterol, but you feel healthy, and have never worried about your cholesterol. So, why do you need to have a cholesterol test?

### **What is cholesterol and how does it affect me?**

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that your body needs to function. Your body makes some cholesterol because it is needed to form cell membranes, some hormones and bile acids (which digest fat), for example. But people consume extra cholesterol through foods, especially animal foods like meats and dairy products. Trans fats also raise cholesterol. Trans fats are found in processed foods.

When there is too much cholesterol in your blood, it can build up on the inside walls of your arteries. Over time, the cholesterol buildup, called plaque, can narrow the space for blood to flow through. This can happen in the arteries everywhere in the body. It is most dangerous, though, in the arteries that feed the heart, brain and other vital organs.

When plaque buildup narrows the coronary arteries, which supply oxygen-rich blood to the heart, it can cause chest pain, shortness of breath and other symptoms of coronary heart disease. If a clot forms on the plaque, it can block the blood flow to the heart muscle, causing a heart attack.

If a clot blocks the flow of blood to the brain, it can cause a stroke. The higher your cholesterol levels, the greater your risk of heart disease and stroke. Given that heart disease is a top killer of men and women in the U.S., this is not a risk that you should ignore. But, eating a heart-healthy diet, being physically active and losing weight



are things everyone can do to help lower their cholesterol levels and their risks.

### **Types of cholesterol**

Your doctor may order tests to check your blood levels of cholesterol. Because cholesterol can't dissolve in the blood (it's not water-soluble), it doesn't circulate by itself. Instead, cholesterol travels through the bloodstream linked to "carriers" called lipoproteins.

There are three different types of lipoproteins. The two that are most important to remember in terms of your possible risk of heart disease are high-density (HDL) and low-density lipoproteins (LDL).

- **LDL.** Cholesterol that is carried on low-density lipoproteins is called LDL cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol). Higher levels of LDL cholesterol are linked to an increased risk for heart disease.

- **HDL.** Cholesterol molecules that are linked to high-density lipoproteins are called HDL

cholesterol (the "good" cholesterol). If you have higher levels of HDL cholesterol, you're at lower risk for heart disease.

### **"Good" and "bad" cholesterol**

Experts believe that LDL is the main carrier of cholesterol to body tissues, and HDL carries cholesterol away from body tissues.

When you have a lot of LDL cholesterol, there is more of a danger that too much may be deposited in artery walls. This may then damage the walls. The arteries may develop a cholesterol and fatty buildup called a plaque on the inside. This is called atherosclerosis, or "hardening of the arteries."

When you have higher levels of HDL in your blood, it means that more high-density lipoproteins carry cholesterol away from arterial walls and to the liver. The liver then eliminates the cholesterol from the body by excreting it in the bile. Clearly, the more this happens, the less likely that cholesterol will accumulate in arterial walls and worsen the progression of atherosclerosis.

### **Why test?**

Cholesterol buildup as plaque can prevent adequate amounts of blood from flowing to the heart muscle. It is the most common cause of coronary heart disease, and happens so slowly that you are not even aware of it. This plaque can rupture, forming a blood clot that leads to a heart attack or stroke. The higher your LDL cholesterol, the greater your chance of heart attack or stroke.





# Turkey Breakfast Patty

## Nutrition Facts

Yields 8 Servings

Amount Per Serving

Calories 105	Fiber 0g
Fat 7g	Protein 10g
Sodium 31mg	Carbohydrates 1g

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound 85 percent lean ground turkey
- 1 teaspoon ground fennel seed
- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper, or to taste
- Nonstick cooking spray

## PREPARATION:

Combine all ingredients, except the cooking spray, in a bowl. Cover bowl and chill for at least an hour, but preferably overnight, to allow the flavors to meld. When ready to cook your patties, shape into eight thin patties. Spray a skillet with nonstick cooking spray and heat over medium heat. Place patties in pan and cook for 3 minutes. Flip and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes, or until the turkey is cooked through.



# 6 Ways to Fend off Seasonal Flu

1. Get a flu shot.
2. Wash your hands often.
3. Keep your hands away from your face.
4. Steer clear of sick people.
5. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
6. Keep your immune system strong.

# Combating Cholesterol

Adding certain foods to your diet may actually help to lower your cholesterol and decrease your risk for heart disease. You know the rules. Eat less red meat, cheese, and butter. Limit fried foods. Avoid trans fats. With so many things to cut out, what's left to eat?

While heart-healthy eating includes lots of "no's," there are plenty of delicious foods you can eat without guilt. What's more, adding certain foods to your diet may actually help to lower your cholesterol and decrease your risk for heart disease.

Unless you have a strong family history of high cholesterol, changing your diet is often enough to lower cholesterol to a healthy level. The key? You need to work certain foods into your diet - not just once in a while, but every day.

So get your shopping list ready! The foods listed below have a high soluble fiber content (and rich nutrients), or a healthy fat ratio. Soluble fiber binds with cholesterol, helping to remove it from the body. Certain fats, when replacing saturated and trans fats, can help lower cholesterol levels.

### Carrots/yams/sweet potatoes

- Blend with chicken broth and sautéed onions for a creamy low-fat soup.
- Bake or mash, then add trans-fat-free margarine and cinnamon.
- Roast with onions and parsnips.

### Brussels sprouts

- Sauté with leeks and garlic.
- Bake in a casserole with brown rice and shredded low-fat cheese.
- Roast with onions and add a dash of grated Parmesan.

### Berries

- Blend fresh or frozen into smoothies.
- Top with low-fat sour cream or yogurt.
- Add to low-fat cottage cheese and top with sesame seeds or nuts.

### Apples and pears

- Slice and eat with a smear of natural peanut butter.
- Chop and add to tuna salad.
- Bake and eat for dessert with a sprinkle of walnuts and cinnamon.

### Beans/legumes

- Add chickpeas or kidney beans to your salad.
- Make a hearty split pea soup.
- Enjoy a lentil curry.
- Mix pinto beans and brown rice with onions and stewed tomatoes.

### Avocado

- Spread onto toasted whole-grain bread and top with sliced tomato.
- Chop into salads.
- Slice and add to a turkey sandwich instead of mayo.

### Salmon and other fatty fish

- Bake with a topping of low-fat sour cream, mustard and dill.
- Add cold fish to a mixed green salad.
- Make salmon cakes with fresh or canned salmon.

No one food or supplement can work miracles, but upping your intake of nutritious foods can make a big difference in your cholesterol level. However, remember that any successful strategy must combine healthy eating, diligent exercise, and stress reduction.

# Shape Up Your Eating Habits

You've decided to cut back on hot dogs, peel the fatty skin off your barbecued chicken and limit mayo-laden macaroni and potato salads. Will this be enough to shape up your summertime eating habits?

Cutting back on high-fat meats and mayo-drenched salads is a good place to start. But along with limiting certain foods, it's just as important to think about what to add to your meal plan.

To make healthy eating habits stick, it's better to think more about enjoying your food and less about what to avoid. Here are some ideas to whet your appetite that won't expand your waistline.

## Make simple substitutions

***Breaking an unhealthy food habit doesn't mean you have to make radical changes or follow complicated recipes.***

- Exchange artery-clogging creamy sauces and dressings with marinades or dressings made with olive oil or canola oil (heart-healthy fats) and herbs.
- Instead of serving a classic potato salad with creamy mayo, try steaming new potatoes and drizzling them with olive oil, garlic powder and chopped chives.
- Look for chicken or turkey sausages to grill instead of pork. They taste delicious and often offer great savings on fat and calories.
- Use barley or quinoa for a grain-based salad instead of pasta or potatoes. Add lots of raw, cut-up veggies, such as red peppers, carrots, red onion and celery.
- Go for sorbets and fruits instead of heavy cakes if you crave dessert.
- Drink plenty of water in lieu of sports drinks and sodas.
- Downsize what you put on your plate. Fill two thirds of it with fruits, vegetables and grains, and one third with poultry, fish or meat.

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## Take advantage of the season

***Summer is prime time for the best fruits and vegetables.***

- Try grilling vegetables, such as pearl onions, mushrooms, zucchini and bell peppers. Most vegetables can be grilled by cutting them into bite-size pieces and threading onto skewers. Grilled fruit kabobs are also a great summertime dessert!
- Buy fresh herbs (or grow them). They can bring out the flavor in food. If you have extra, chop them up, put them in an ice-cube tray and fill it with water. Once the herbs freeze, pop them out and put them in a plastic bag. Defrost by running them under hot water.
- At your next barbecue, skip the chips and serve crunchy carrot sticks, bell pepper strips and broccoli with a low-fat dip.
- Head to the beach with a veggie-filled picnic lunch. In addition to turkey or lean ham on whole-wheat bread, pack fruits and vegetables such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, grapes, plums and cherries.
- If you are going camping or hiking, unsweetened dried fruits, such as cranberries, raisins, apricots and figs, are easy to tote in your backpack.
- Avoid food dyes and excess sugar and make your own frozen fruit pops at home. Freeze 100% fruit juice in small paper cups (add diced-up fruit to the juice before freezing for extra fiber and nutrients). Insert wooden sticks when the juice is slushy enough to hold the stick upright. When the juice is frozen solid, peel the paper off and serve.
- Keep containers of fruits and vegetables washed and cut into bite-sized pieces in the refrigerator. Have them as snacks instead of chips and cookies.



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## SEPTEMBER



Sheridah Bennett  
(AristaPoint Wellness Champion)

## Wellness Tip

### Do you hate shots?

Consider the nasal spray vaccine.

**Influenza (flu) is a common, contagious disease that kills thousands of people each year. Getting a flu shot each fall can help prevent flu. But some people would rather risk getting sick than get a shot. If you hate shots, but want flu protection, you may have another choice. The flu vaccine is also available as a nasal spray.**

*We want your feed-back about the Wellness Newsletter. Please e-mail us at [wellness@aaomercia.org](mailto:wellness@aaomercia.org) with any wellness tips or healthy recipe ideas.*