



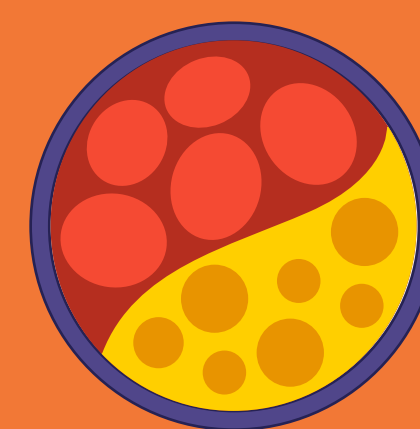
Lifestyle Changes to Lower Cholesterol

Cholesterol is fat your body needs to build cells and make hormones. Your body makes cholesterol and absorbs it from the foods you eat.

Three types of lipids (fats) related to heart health:

Triglycerides store unused calories and re-release them with hormones when you need energy.

HDL and triglycerides are "lifestyle lipids." High HDL and low triglycerides mean you're living a healthier lifestyle.

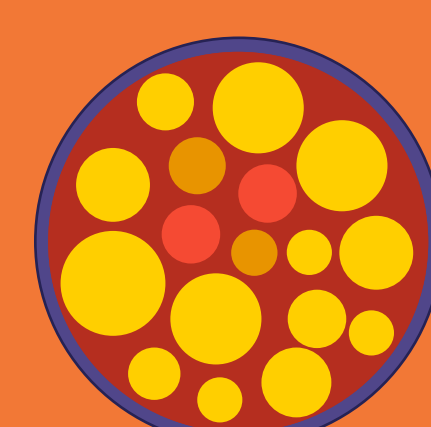
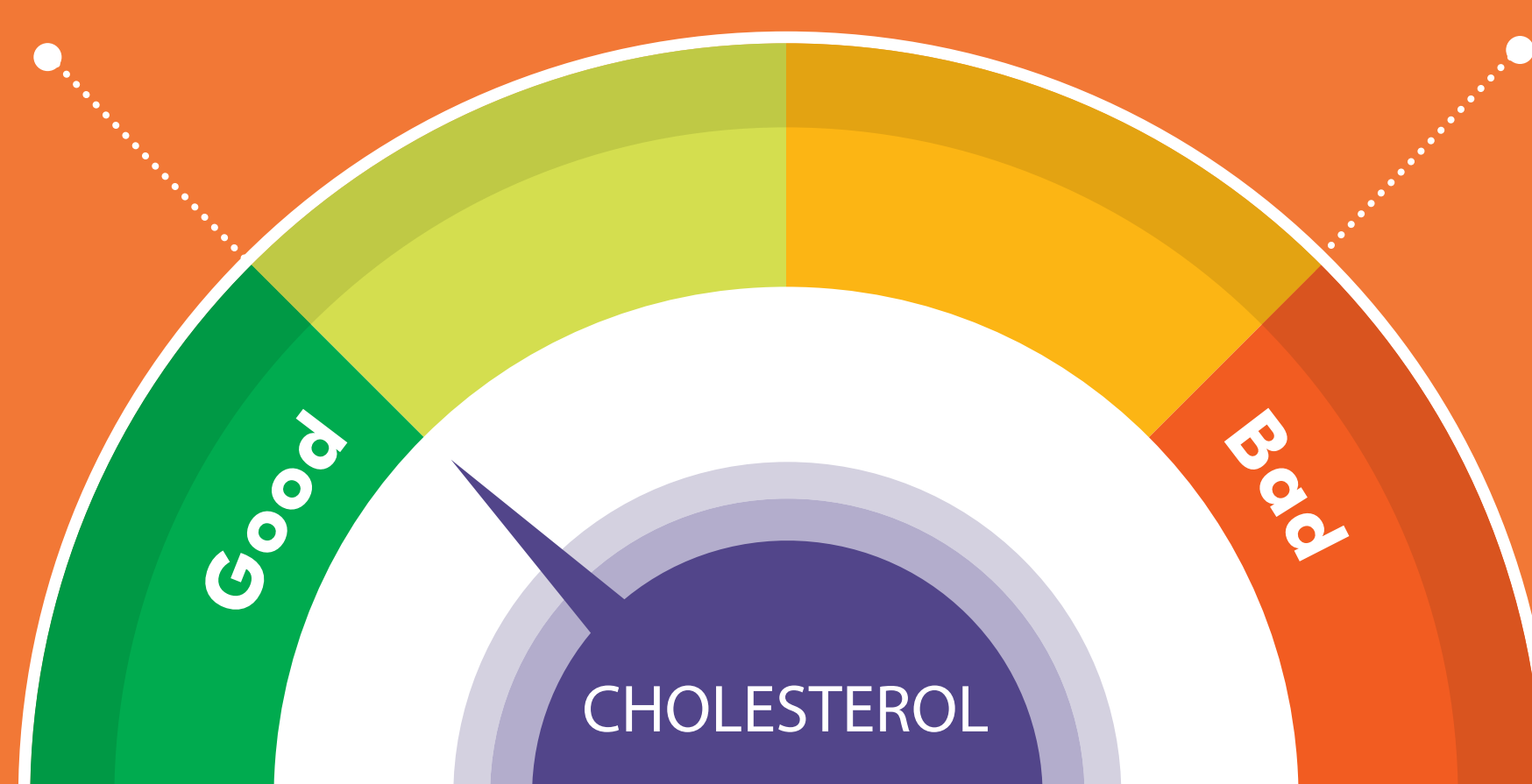


"Happy" **high-density lipoproteins (HDL)** remove bad cholesterol in the arteries.

High HDL = lower heart attack risk

"Lousy" **low-density lipoproteins (LDL)** cause plaque buildup and hardening of the arteries.

High LDL = higher risk of heart attack, stroke and heart disease



Here's how to lower cholesterol with lifestyle modifications.

1 Maintain a healthy weight.



Aim for 3% to 5% weight loss.

2 Exercise.

Move your body 150 minutes per week.



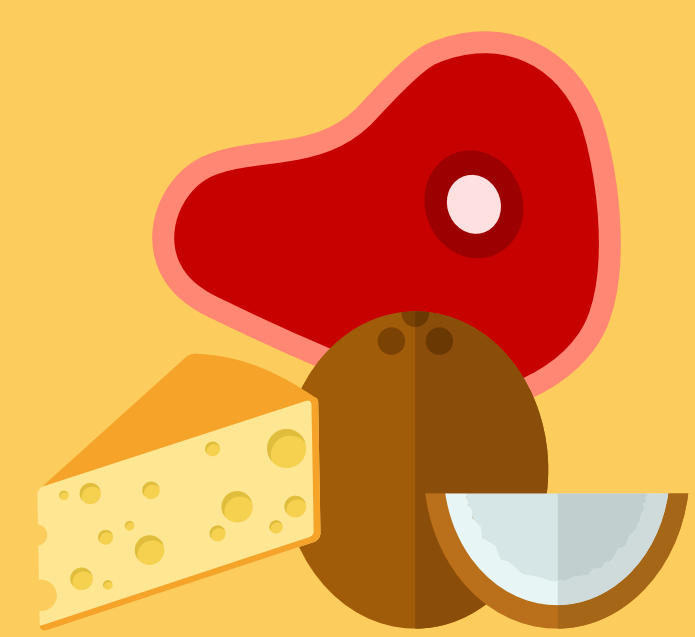
3 Quit it. Stop smoking.



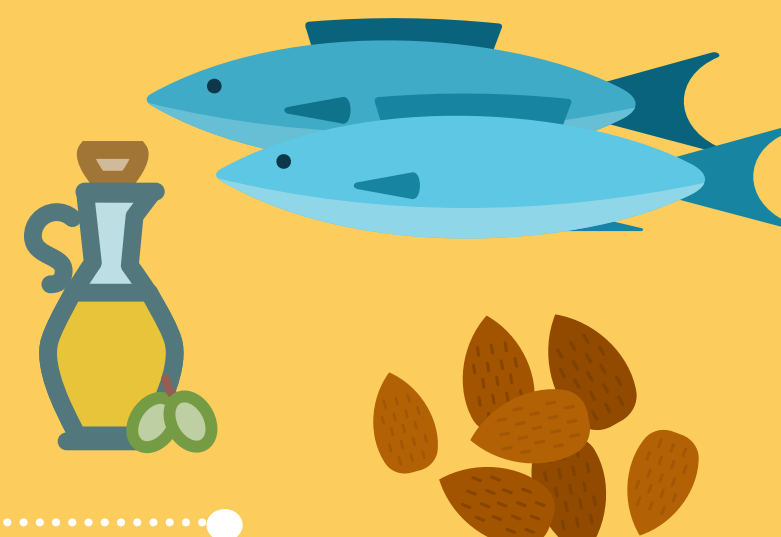
Smoking decreases HDL and damages blood vessels, which leads to increased risk of plaque buildup from LDL.

4 Try it with diet.

Reduce **saturated fat** to no more than 5% to 6% of daily calories.



Eat more **unsaturated fat**, in moderation.



Eat more **dietary fiber**. Aim for 28 grams each day.

Soluble fiber, a type of dietary fiber, helps bind cholesterol from the foods you eat. Foods rich in soluble fiber include:

- Black, lima and kidney beans
- Brussels sprouts
- Avocados
- Sweet potatoes
- Broccoli
- Pears
- Figs
- Apples
- Nectarines
- Apricots
- Flax and sunflower seeds
- Oats and barley



5 Drink alcohol in moderation.

Do not drink in excess, which can increase LDL.

One drink per day for women and one to two drinks per day for men raises HDL.



If your cholesterol doesn't decrease with lifestyle changes, many medications are available to help. Consult your physician. Everyone over the age of 20 should have their cholesterol checked by their primary care provider.



Research continues to look for better detection and treatment options.

Sources:

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