

## Some foods can be cholesterol fighters

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(HealthDay)—Watching your cholesterol has gotten easier.

Nutrition experts now agree that foods high in [cholesterol](#), like shrimp,

don't have the impact on blood cholesterol that was once thought. So depending on your current cholesterol count, you may not have to curtail your intake of many formerly forbidden foods.

Even better news—some foods can bring down your cholesterol level. Since that's only one of their benefits, consider adding them all to your overall diet.

Walnuts have healthy unsaturated fats that help lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol—that's the unhealthy type. Almonds, hazelnuts and pistachios are good choices, too.

The magic in beans and oats is [soluble fiber](#), which helps flush cholesterol out of your system before it can do harm. Enjoy hot or cold oat cereals and experiment with beans in place of meat at lunch and dinner.

Avocados are rich in mono-unsaturated fatty acids and can also help lower LDL. Use slices instead of mayo on sandwiches and dip raw veggies rather than chips into fresh guacamole.

Many plant foods naturally contain sterols and stanols, substances that fight off cholesterol, and some foods are now fortified with them. Eating 2 to 3 grams of sterols and stanols a day can lower LDL by 10 to 15 percent, and lower heart disease risk by 20 percent when you also follow a heart-healthy diet, health experts say. Read labels to help you keep a running count of your intake. For instance, 8 ounces of [sterol](#)-fortified [orange juice](#) has about 1 gram.

Foods high in saturated fats, such as red meat and butter, are the ones more likely to raise cholesterol. Talk to your doctor about the right portion sizes and daily limits for your health needs.

**More information:** The Joslin Diabetes Center has detailed information on how [plant sterols and stanols](#) work to lower cholesterol and boost health.

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