

Risk factors for high cholesterol you can control

The food you eat

Eating foods high in saturated fat or trans fat can raise your cholesterol levels.

Cholesterol can create a substance called plaque that can build up in your arteries. When plaque builds up in the arteries, it may be hard for blood to flow through them.

These are some examples of foods that have saturated fat:

- Meats that come from animals, such as fatty beef and chicken with the skin
- Dairy products, such as whole or reduced-fat milk, cream, butter, and cheese
- Deep-fried foods



These are some examples of foods that have trans fat:

- Fried foods
- Some margarines or shortening

Foods high in cholesterol also can raise your cholesterol levels. These are some examples of foods high in cholesterol:

- Liver and other organ meats
- Egg yolks
- Cheese, cream, and butter
- Some types of shellfish, such as shrimp

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Weight

If you are overweight, you may be at risk of having high cholesterol. Too much weight can also raise your risk of high blood pressure and diabetes. All of these risk factors can raise your chance of heart disease.

Exercise habits

Lack of exercise can cause weight gain, which can make your cholesterol levels go up. Exercise helps raise the HDL (good) cholesterol. It also helps lower the LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Diabetes

Diabetes causes sugars to build up in the blood. People with diabetes may also have high cholesterol.

TIP

Avoid eating foods high in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol.



Smoking

Smoking damages the walls of your arteries. It can cause plaque to build up in your arteries. Smoking may lower your HDL (good) cholesterol, which can increase your risk of heart disease.