

Nutriti



n Fact Sheet

HDL "The Good Cholesterol"



What is HDL?

HDL is a type of cholesterol transporter that carries cholesterol away from the arteries and back to the liver, where it can then be excreted from the body.

Why is it considered "good?"

HDL removes excess LDL cholesterol from arterial plaque, slowing the progression of arterial disease, also known as atherosclerosis. HDL may have other protective effects on your heart and blood vessels, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-clotting effects.

Arterial Plaque



HDL



What can cause HDL to become low?

- **Smoking**
Smoking not only lowers HDL cholesterol, but also alters its chemical make-up, reducing its benefits.
- **Being Overweight**
- **Consuming Refined Carbohydrates**



- **Physical Inactivity**
- **Certain Drugs**

Anabolic steroids
Beta-blockers
Diuretics
Progestins



HDL Ranges*

	At Risk	Desirable
Men	Less than 40 mg/dL	60 mg/dL or above
Women	Less than 50 mg/dL	60 mg/dL or above

*values adapted from the Mayo Clinic

How To Raise Your HDL

Certain Foods Raise HDL

Foods that contain Omega-3 fatty acids are known to help raise HDL

- **Fatty Fish:** salmon, herring, mackerel, sea bass & sardines
- **Walnuts**
- **Green leafy**
- **Flaxseed**



Losing Weight Raises HDL

Oftentimes fat loss will lower LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) and increase HDL



Supplements Can Raise HDL

Omega-3 Fish Oils

1g of EPA & DHA*

Niacin

Can raise HDL 15-35%

Dose: talk to your doctor prior to starting regimen

Side effect: Flushing - talk to your doctor about taking an 81mg aspirin prior to taking Niacin to avoid flushing.

*See additional Omega-3 handout for more information on supplements and dosing

Physical Activity Raises HDL

Get off the couch and move! You don't have to be an Olympic athlete to improve the health of your heart. Try to accumulate 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a minimum of 5 days per week to help raise your HDL - **consistency** is crucial!



"What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?"

Additional HDL considerations

- Very low fat diets can lower HDL, so it's always good to include good fats in your diet (**nuts, avocados, fish, beans**)
- Sometimes dietary changes that decrease total cholesterol significantly will temporarily lower HDL, however if dietary habits are maintained over time HDL will bounce back.