Ways to Lower Your Family’s Cholesterol

Submitted by Sue Yarberry

Here are some simple steps you can take to keep your family’s cholesterol at healthy levels:

1. **Have the cholesterol levels of both you and your children checked.**
2. **Read labels so that you can limit cholesterol and saturated and trans fat intake.**

   It’s recommended that cholesterol intake be less than 300 milligrams a day. To determine how much cholesterol is in the foods your family eats, read nutrition labels. Also, the American Heart Association recommends that total fat intake should be 30% or less of your total calories and that saturated fat should be 10% or less. Because they usually contain substantial amounts of cholesterol, you and your family should try to avoid, as often as possible:
   - **saturated fats** – all animal fats and some tropical oils
   - **trans fats** – fats formed when vegetable oils are hardened into margarine or shortening (In 2006, the amount of trans fats in foods began to appear on nutrition labels. For now, when checking labels, look for the word “hydrogenated.”)

3. **Eat healthy snacks that are low in fat and cholesterol, such as:**
   - fruit
   - raw vegetables and low-fat dips
   - plain unsalted popcorn or pretzels
   - low-fat yogurt and gelatin

4. **Replace some meals of red meat with:**
   - poultry
   - fish
   - beans
   - peas
   - lentils
   - tofu
   - soy products (many on the market today are very tasty and mimic hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken fingers, etc.)

5. **Stay away from butter or stick margarine.** Use liquid vegetable oil for cooking and tub margarine for table use.

6. **Limit intake of commercially prepared baked goods and treats.**

7. **Avoid soda and sugary fruit drinks** because excess sugar into fats.