

FOOD SECTION

Tips to Deciphering Misleading Labels

Reading between the lines can help reduce your risk of heart and blood vessel diseases.

The first step is to read food labels carefully.

"It's important to know what you're eating. Reading food labels and understanding them is an important part of controlling risk of heart and blood vessel diseases," said Victor Menashe, M.D., President of the American Heart Association, Oregon Affiliate, Inc.

Consuming excessive amounts of cholesterol and saturated fats can increase your risk of heart and blood vessel diseases. Understanding these ingredients is an important part of reading labels.

Cholesterol is a soft, fat-like substance found in all animal products (meat, fish, poultry) and is especially high in egg yolks and organ meats.

The fats found in your food are not all exactly alike in either type or impact on cardiovascular disease.

Saturated fats usually harden at room temperature and are found in animal products and in some vegetable products. Coconut oil, cocoa butter, palm oil and palm kernel oil are also sources of saturated fat.

Polyunsaturated fats are oils from vegetable products such as safflower and sunflower seeds, corn and soybeans. They help lower blood cholesterol.

Monounsaturated fats are liquid vegetable oils such as canola and olive oils. New research indicates that they may also help reduce blood cho-

lesterol.

Only saturated and polyunsaturated fats are listed on labels. Although monounsaturated fats may make up a large portion of the total fat in food, they are not listed separately.

Cholesterol does not have to be listed on food labels. If it is listed, it must be shown as milligrams (mg.) of cholesterol per serving and as milligrams per 100 grams of food.

Sodium is another food ingredient that you should monitor closely. Excessive intake of table salt and other products high in sodium content can lead to high blood pressure, which is a risk factor for a heart attack or stroke.

How much fat, cholesterol and sodium should you consume?

The AHA recommends that total fat intake should be less than 30 percent of calories. Saturated fat should be less than 10 percent of calories. Cholesterol intake should not exceed 300 milligrams a day, and sodium should not exceed three grams per day.

By using the information on the label, you can determine the amount of calories per serving for fat. Fat supplies nine calories per gram. By multiplying the grams per serving by calories per gram, you can determine the calories in that serving which come from fat. By doing the same calculations for carbohydrates and proteins and adding up the calories, you get a total of calories in a particular serving. Calories are rounded to the nearest ten.

When reading a food label, remember that the ingredients are listed

in descending order. The ingredient found in the greatest quantity (by weight) is listed first.

"Some food manufacturers make misleading claims on labels, but if you are familiar with cholesterol, fats, and sodium and know how to read between the lines you won't be fooled," Dr. Menashe emphasized.

For example, a label may claim that the product is cholesterol-free, but the food could still be loaded with saturated fats. Low-cholesterol doesn't necessarily mean low-fat.

Phrases like "sodium free" can also be misleading. The following American Heart Association definitions will help clarify some confusing terms.

--Sodium-free: less than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving

--Very low sodium: 35 milligrams or less per serving

--Low sodium: 140 milligrams or less per serving

--Unsalted, no salt added, or without added salt: made without adding additional salt, but still contains natural salt found within the food.



Info. on H₂O

Distilled water is pure water with no added chemicals or minerals. It tastes bitter when mixed with saliva in the mouth.

Soft water has a low mineral content when it occurs naturally. Commercially softened water often is very high in added sodium.

Hard water has a higher mineral content than soft water. It is the type that most people use, and can be hard on one's hair and skin (but our hair and skin is made to take it).

Still water is what most people commonly refer to as tap water. In areas with ground water pollution, contamination may be a health concern.

Mineral water can be bottled or canned water with added minerals to improve the flavor. Sometimes natural or artificial flavors are added.

Sparkling water is bubbly from carbonation. It may have carbonation added or naturally.

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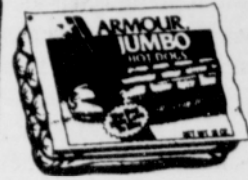
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What's Cholesterol?

If you're puzzled about cholesterol, you're not alone, says Mary Helen Gunkler, registered dietitian and staff nutritionist for Total cereal. Recent surveys conducted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration report that many people are puzzled about cholesterol. What foods contribute cholesterol? If there's fat in a food, does it also contain cholesterol?

A soft and waxy fatlike substance, cholesterol comes from two sources. Cholesterol in the foods we eat is dietary cholesterol. Blood cholesterol comes from the foods we eat and the body's own manufacturing process. While blood cholesterol is a risk factor for heart disease, it is essential to the functioning of the nervous system and the brain. And it is used by the body to manufacture cell walls and hormones.

Gunkler suggests an easy way to differentiate between cholesterol-containing foods and those that do not contain cholesterol. Only foods from animal origins contribute dietary cholesterol. This includes eggs, dairy products, meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. Cholesterol is present in both low-fat as well as high-fat animal foods.

Foods of plant origins — fruits, vegetables, grains, cereals, nuts, seeds, dry beans and peas — do not contain cholesterol. Because of their vegetable origin, cooking and salad oils, such as corn, olive and safflower oils, do not contain cholesterol. Even the tropical vegetable oils, such as palm, palm kernel and coconut oils, have no cholesterol.

The chart below shows that chicken and certain fish are lower in total fat than red meat. However, the dietary cholesterol content is actually quite similar for all three. In comparison, eggs and organ meats, such as liver, kidney, sweetbread and brain, are particularly high in cholesterol. Shellfish vary in cholesterol content, with shrimp contributing more cholesterol than many meats.

Fat and Cholesterol Content of Selected Foods

Food	Measure Unit, Weight	Total Fat, gm	Cholesterol, mg
Milk, skim, fluid or reconstituted dry	1 cup	0.6	5
Milk, whole	1 cup	8.2	33
Cottage cheese, creamed	1 cup	10.1	34
Cheddar cheese	1 ounce	9.4	30
Butter	1 tablespoon	11.4	31
Whole Wheat Total cereal ¹	1 cup	1.0	0
Tuna, oil pack, drained	3 ounces, canned	7.0	55
Flounder, sole	3 ounces, baked	1.0	59
Shrimp	3 ounces, canned	0.9	128
Roast beef, lean only	3 ounces, cooked	5.9	56
Ground beef	3 ounces, cooked	15.6	88
Liver	3 ounces, fried	9.0	372
Chicken, light meat, no skin	3 ounces, baked	3.8	72
Egg, large	1 raw or boiled	5.6	274

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Provisional Table on Fats, Acid and Cholesterol Content of Selected Foods, 1984.
Information added by General Mills, Inc.

The average American diet includes 350 to 450 mg of cholesterol per day. Health experts recommend a reduction to less than 300 mg per day.

Gunkler concludes that cutting down on dietary cholesterol may help lower blood cholesterol. However, she notes that it is more important to limit the total amount of fat in the diet, a subject of future Total Nutrition columns.

WHY NOT CELERY FOR A LOW-CALORIE SLAW?

Crunchy celery is a delicious alternative to cabbage in this low-calorie slaw that's easily prepared in a food processor. It makes a fine salad for backyard barbecues, or spoon it into pita bread for sandwiches.

CELERY-RAISIN SLAW

- 5 large celery ribs, cut in 4-inch pieces
- 2 large carrots, cut in 2-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup plain lowfat yogurt
- 2 tablespoons calorie-reduced mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- Salt and pepper

In a food processor fitted with a thin slicing blade process celery (makes about 4 cups). Change to shredding blade; process carrots (makes about 1 cup). Or, thinly slice celery and shred carrots. Place in a large bowl. Add raisins. In a small bowl combine yogurt, mayonnaise, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste; toss with celery mixture. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Yield: 6 portions
4 1/2 cups
Per portion: 79 calories



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