

Understanding Cholesterol & Nutrition

Small changes can make a big difference for your heart health.



What has the biggest impact on LDL ("bad") cholesterol?

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Saturated Fat

Saturated fat has the largest dietary impact on **raising LDL cholesterol**.

Common sources include:

- Butter
- Cream
- High-fat cheese
- Fatty cuts of beef, pork and lamb
- Sausage, bacon and deli meats
- Coconut oil
- Palm oil
- Many pastries and baked goods

Choose more often:

- ✓ Olive or canola oil
- ✓ Avocado
- ✓ Nuts and seeds
- ✓ Natural nut butters
- ✓ Fish
- ✓ Beans, lentils and tofu

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Soluble Fiber

Soluble fibre helps **remove cholesterol** from the body.

Aim to include **2–4 servings** of soluble fibre-rich foods each day.

Good choices include:

- Oats
- Barley
- Beans, lentils and chickpeas
- Apples
- Pears
- Ground flaxseed
- Chia seeds
- Psyllium

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Your Overall Eating Pattern

Rather than focusing on one food, aim for meals that include:

- Plenty of vegetables and fruit
- Whole grains
- Healthy fats (olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado)
- Plant proteins more often
- Fish regularly

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Reading Food Labels

When comparing similar products, choose options that are:

✓ Lower in saturated fat

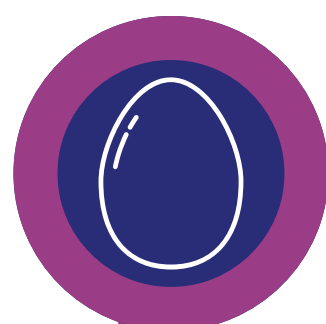
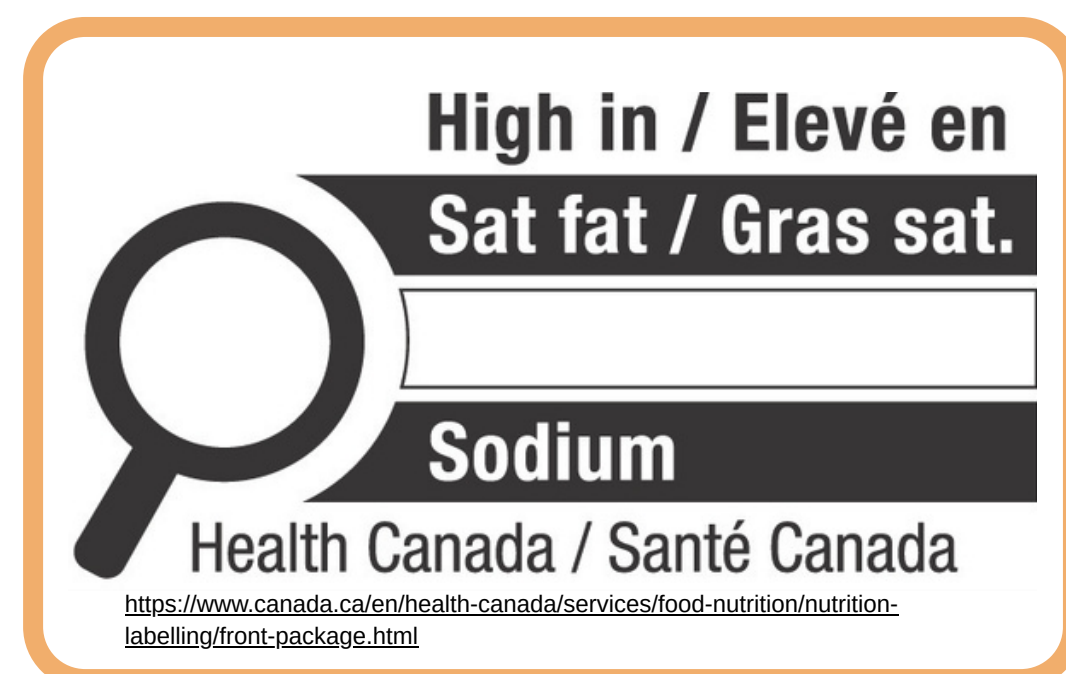
✓ Higher in fibre

✓ Lower in sodium

Watch for Front-of-Package Nutrition Symbols

Canada's front-of-package symbol identifies foods that are high in saturated fat, sodium, and/or sugars.

Use it as a quick comparison tool—not a rule that a food must be avoided.



What About Eggs?

For most people, dietary cholesterol (such as eggs and shrimp) has much less impact on blood cholesterol than saturated fat.

Eggs can be included as part of a heart-healthy eating pattern unless your healthcare provider has advised otherwise.



Small Changes Add Up

- ✓ Replace butter with olive or canola oil.
- ✓ Enjoy oatmeal for breakfast.
- ✓ Include beans or lentils more often.
- ✓ Choose nuts or fruit instead of pastries or baked goods.
- ✓ Swap some red meat meals for fish or plant proteins.
- ✓ Fill half your plate with vegetables at lunch and dinner.

Need personalized support?
Everyone's nutrition needs are different.

This handout provides general nutrition information and is not a substitute for individualized medical or nutrition advice. Speak with a **Registered Dietitian** for recommendations tailored to your health needs.