

# A Natural approach to Lowering Cholesterol:

THERE is much hype out there about cholesterol. It seems that on a whole, our cholesterol levels are on the increase, in particular our LDL (bad) cholesterol. Did you know that there is a lot you can do to help lower your cholesterol naturally? Nutritional Therapist and CNM Graduate Anna Caulfield shares some of her tips to help you improve your overall cholesterol levels and health.

Whilst it is important to have some cholesterol in our body. Not only is it required for making stress and sex hormones, it helps with the functioning of our nerves and cells and is important for vitamin D formation. The downside is that too much intake has been linked to various health issues, especially when it comes to our cardiovascular system for example, heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure.

Cholesterol is made up of LDL and HDL, it is recommended to have LDL of less than 3.0 mmol/L and HDL greater than 0.9 mmol/L and total cholesterol of 5.0 mmol/L and below. For those who want to take a natural pro-active approach to lowering cholesterol and avoid the use of prescribed statins here are some tips to naturally lower your cholesterol;

- Eat more plant foods which includes basically all vegetables (Choose organic when possible.) and plant based foods in

particular;

- Garlic and onions
- Whole grains
- Beans and lentils (organic where possible) such as red kidney beans, chickpeas, peas, borlotti, pinto, haricot beans, broad, mung, green beans
- Whole grains

- Increase Omega 3

Oily fish, nuts, seeds and flaxseed/hemp oil all contain essential fatty acids such as Omega 3 which refer to the 'good fats' that we must obtain from our diet and have multiple health benefits. These "good fats" will help with lowering the 'bad' LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and increase the 'good' HDL (high-density lipoprotein) levels in our body. This could be -

- Two portions of oily fish per week (mackerel, trout, herrings, sardines, anchovies, salmon)

- Handful of nuts daily - raw walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts

- Flaxseed or hemp oil - on porridge, over soups, stews, salad dressing (don't cook with it as high temperatures damage the content)

- Increase Fibre rich foods

Soluble fibre helps to lower cholesterol levels by binding to the cholesterol in the digestive system and eliminating it from the body before it gets into circulation.

- Plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables (aim for eight portions a day

3 fruit, 5 vegetables). - again choose organic when possible

- Oats and oatbran
- Whole grains such as brown rice, quinoa, barley

- Beans and lentils

- Reduce intake of saturated fat, salt and caffeine - as well as avoiding pre-packaged processed meals can all help in the

quest to naturally lower cholesterol as well as having other beneficial health effects.

- Manage Stress

In addition it has been recommended to find ways to manage stress levels and incorporate some relaxation into your day. Whether that is quitting smoking

or doing daily exercise. Exercise can lower LDL and raise HDL levels which is our ultimate aim.

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If a venue in the South East stated it had 25,000 through its doors in 2014 you'd be forgiven for thinking it was a tourist attraction. However, this figure represents the number of patients that attended a private and independent hospital in Waterford.

These patients attended Whitfield Clinic for elective procedures, thus avoiding the main stream system, availing of their health insurance and proactively choosing Whitfield. This volume of elective work places Whitfield as a major player in healthcare in the South East of Ireland.

Whitfield Clinic, Waterford's private healthcare facility, now partners with all the major health insurance companies, in order to provide the best level of health care to its patients.

Commenting on the partnership with the main health insurance providers, Mr. David Beirne, CEO, Whitfield Clinic, said, "Since Whitfield Clinic opened in 2006 we have strived to provide the best level of private patient care in the South East region. This standard of quality is endorsed by our CHKS accreditation and ISO 9001:2008 certification. We are the first private hospital in Ireland to achieve



this prestigious dual award; it is something we are very proud of. Our services are growing rapidly and along with 60 consultants, a further 300 medical, surgical and

administrative professionals are employed here." Whitfield Clinic provides 40 private beds, a 24 bed day surgery unit, four operating

theatres, an endoscopy suite and an oncology day ward. Private health insurance customers can avail of the extensive range of services, all available to view on

[www.whitfieldclinic.ie](http://www.whitfieldclinic.ie). Mr. Beirne added, "By partnering with the main insurance companies, VHI, Laya, Aviva and GLOHealth, anybody that

has private health insurance can benefit from Whitfield's resources to ensure their hospital experience is as comfortable as possible."

"As all procedures carried out at Whitfield are elective, this reduces the waiting time to as little as one week for most procedures and an average inpatient stay of two or three nights."

"Patients get invaluable peace of mind knowing exactly when they will be seen and when their procedure will be undertaken. More often than not, it is this uncertainty that causes undue stress and anxiety to anyone who is unwell. That's why by choosing Whitfield that uncertainty is alleviated."

Whitfield Clinic also provides a wide range of diagnostic and support provisions including MRI, Ultrasound, X-Ray and CT, with almost 1,100 patients availing of these services last December alone.

To find out more about Whitfield Clinic and the Whitfield Radiotherapy and Cancer Treatment Centre, visit [www.whitfieldclinic.ie](http://www.whitfieldclinic.ie) or call 051 - 337400.