

## September is Cholesterol Awareness Month!

By Ashley J. Sicilia



**Did you know that taking certain medications can actually put you at risk for unhealthy cholesterol levels?** According to Healthfinder.gov, “Taking certain medicines, like medicines to lower blood pressure” can increase your LDL (harmful) cholesterol levels! **Who knew?**

**Being healthy, including maintaining healthy cholesterol levels, has everything to do with three key things: your**

**medical history, your diet, and your habits.** You cannot change your family medical history and in most cases, you cannot change what medical problems you are naturally or genetically prone to. You can, however, change your diet and your habits, which in turn, may successfully resolve, or at least lighten the burden of, certain medical problems or make select medical problems more manageable, including unhealthy cholesterol levels (and for that matter, high blood pressure).

**We’ve heard it before, but seriously, ‘diet and exercise’ is truly the essence of healthy living.** Culturally, we have a habit of including the worst kinds of foods in our celebrations – whether it be for birthdays, holidays, or even just a casual “Sunday-Funday”. So, what can we do? Incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into our daily routines. We know, it’s cliché, and it’s easier said than done. But, the notion itself is quite simple – make good habits a part of your life.

**September is Cholesterol Awareness Month** and eating heart healthy foods can reduce unhealthy cholesterol levels. Focus on consuming less red meats, full-fat dairy, margarines, cookies, cakes, and eat more salmon, mackerel, herring, walnuts, flaxseeds, nuts, avocados, oatmeal, apples, pears, and foods that have been fortified with sterols and stanols (natural substances in plants that help block the absorption of cholesterol). (Mayo Clinic)

**Keep physical activity a top priority.** If you have a desk job, be sure to get up and move every so often. Cornell University Ergonomics Web states that extensive sitting relates to heart disease risks. Build more movement into your day. Director and researcher at Cornell’s Human Factors and Ergonomics Laboratory, Alan Hedge, suggests for the average desk job worker, to follow a sit-stand-stretch work pattern. Doing so will greatly improve overall health. He recommends sitting for 20 minutes, standing for 8, and stretching for 2. (May)

**Increased physical activity is one approach to lowering unhealthy cholesterol levels.** We at Tycor want you to step up to the challenge and join us as we add more physical activity to our days. An article on ScienceDaily states previous studies have proven vigorous stair climbing to be beneficial, but did you know that **sprint interval training also improves cardiorespiratory fitness?** According to the National Institutes of Health, climbing two additional flights of stairs can lead up to six pounds of weight loss per year!

**>> For the month of September, we are taking steps to lowering our unhealthy cholesterol levels. The challenge: [Take the stairs at every opportunity, every day, for the entire month of September — in the hopes of making steps in September a habit for life.](#)**

It is absolutely possible for people to improve their health and cholesterol levels by simply changing their diet and habits. Lower your unhealthy cholesterol levels by increasing your movement and taking September *steps* to changing your lifestyle – for good!

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## Sources

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