



The Highs and Lows of Cholesterol – What You Should Know by

[Megan Barefoot, CHNC](#)

Is Your Cholesterol a Problem?

If you are one of the many North Americans that have recently had their blood tested and found out they have elevated triglycerides, re-

duced HDL cholesterol and/or blood glucose imbalances, I am here to tell you there is hope. Nutrition can make a huge impact on cholesterol and help turn your



health around before serious issues arise. Finding out you have high cholesterol levels can come as a shock to many and there is little advice given once the results are in so today, we are go-

ing to discuss how simple additions to your meals can help get you on the path to health. **Continued on page 3...**

To Detox or to Not Detox...That Is the Question by [Jennifer Lloyd, RHN](#)

Here we are, not only a new year, but a new decade! New Year's goals and resolutions have begun and for many that includes the urge to cleanse or detox. I've already had several emails and comments asking how to get started! With that in mind I hope to spare you from many of the trendy detoxes that promise dramatic results. Diets that claim to clear your body of all those holiday treats, release toxins and at the same time, shed a few pounds. In my years as a nutritionist, I've seen many fads in health and wellness. So many diet trends, cleanses and detox programs that I even have a hard time keeping up with them all.

Let's start at the beginning...

Detoxification is a series of processes occurring DAILY in our bodies. It's Mother

Nature's way! The liver, intestines, kidneys, skin, sweat glands, and lymph nodes all aid the body in breaking down and eliminating impurities that result from an abundance of processed foods, environmental toxins, or that we produce naturally.

As you can already tell, I'm not a fan for drastic detoxes! I am an advocate for a year-round, nutrient dense diet as opposed to stretches deprivation and eliminating whole foods groups - they are simply impossible to maintain and not an easy thing to do without guidance. My philosophy is based on creating a strong foundation for your health with great nutrition and lifestyle habits that you can tweak and improve along the way. A *quick side note here, if you are trying to deal with* **Continued on page 2...**

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Want More Cholesterol Tips? See a Holistic Nutrition Professional



Salted Caramel Chocolates by [Melanie Robinson, CHNC](#)

Ingredients

For the chocolate:

1/4 cup coconut oil
 1/4 cup smooth almond butter
 1/4 cup cacao powder
 15 pecans, cut in half

For the caramel:

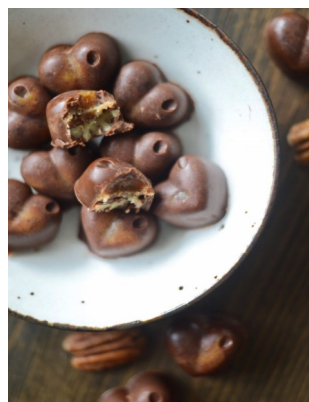
5 medjool dates (shiny and sticky, not dry)
 1 tsp ghee (use organic butter if ghee not available)
 pinch of sea salt

Instructions

To make caramel, simply add dates into a small bowl and begin to squish dates using a fork. Drag the fork along the dates to break it down until it becomes a paste. Add ghee and continue to combine paste. Sprinkle with sea salt and mix one last time. Next, with wet fingertips, make 30 small balls (a little bigger than the size of a marble) and set aside.

To make the chocolate, you will need a medium size glass bowl and a small saucepan. Add a couple inches of water to the saucepan and bring water to a simmer. Add glass bowl to cover saucepan, ensuring the bottom is not touching the water. Add coconut oil and almond butter and let it melt. Stir to combine. Once full melted, turn off heat and add cacao powder. Using a small whisk, ensure all of the cacao has been mixed in.

To assemble: fill silicone chocolate molds 3/4 full (about 1 tsp), add one caramel ball and one halved pecan to each mold. Freeze for 30 minutes to set. Store in an airtight container in freezer or fridge.



Roasted Sweet Potato Goat Cheese Dip by [Patricia Eales, RHN](#)

Ingredients

3-4 medium to large sized sweet potatoes (peel and cut into 2 inch cubes)
 1 tbsp of grapeseed oil or walnut oil (other nut oils like macadamia are nice as well)
 1 - 2 cloves garlic (to your taste)
 8 ounces soft goat cheese
 Pinch of sea salt, Celtic or pink Himalayan salt (approx 1/2 tsp)

Instructions

Heat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Toss the sweet potatoes with grapeseed oil and place in a shallow baking dish. Bake until you can insert a fork, approximately 40 - 45 minutes, turning once halfway through. Allow to cool for about 20 - 30 minutes.

Combine the sweet potatoes, peeled garlic cloves, goat cheese and salt and place in your food processor. Blend until smooth. If you only have a small food processor, blend in batches.

Serve with toasted pita or tortilla bites.



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digestives or skin issues, inflammation, candida, arthritis etc., then eliminating the top triggers for food sensitivities might be what you need to get your health back on track.

Eating Seasonally...

I'm a big believer in eating with the seasons and Winter is a time for hearty, grounding and warming comforting foods. Lots of soups and stews with root vegetables on the ingredients list. Hop over [here](#) and read more about Root Vegetables and why they are so good for you at this time of year.

In addition to eating seasonally, here are my top 5 suggestions to help nudge our bodies in the cleansing direction...

Sleep and lots of it! Sleep is fundamental for detoxification and rejuvenation. Getting into bed before 10:00 p.m. is not only essential but much easier to do at this time year with the longer, dark evenings. 'Every hour of sleep before midnight is worth two after midnight.' Your body naturally cleanses, repairs and restores mostly during sleep.

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But first what does it mean to have high cholesterol? It's important to note that cholesterol, which is a fatty waxy substance, is vital to our cells and it's naturally made in the liver. Our body makes enough cholesterol on its own, so if we never ate food with cholesterol ever again, we would be okay. That being said, there are some extremely healthy foods that contain high levels of cholesterol that we should not be afraid of eating either. Cholesterol is not only part of every cell wall in our body but it's vital for making hormones, vitamin D and digestive juices.

There are two types of lipoproteins that carry cholesterol in the blood, LDL or Low-density lipoproteins and HDL or High-density lipoproteins. LDL cholesterol is often referred to as the **"bad cholesterol"** as it's the cholesterol that is found in the plaque build up in the arteries. LDL is the lipoprotein that carries the cholesterol made in the liver to all areas of our body. Cholesterol has anti-inflammatory properties so when there is inflammation in the arteries this cholesterol sticks to the areas of damage and acts to protect the artery walls. Unfortunately, these plaques can build up and the arteries become narrow and blockages can occur. HDL is the lipoprotein that carries cholesterol from the extremities of the body back to the liver to be broken down. It is referred to as the **"good cholesterol"**.

As I mentioned before cholesterol is needed in the body but when there is inflammation in the cardiovascular system (which can occur for several reasons) the balance between the good and the bad cholesterol becomes very important. This is where nutrition can really help. It can help bring down inflammation to help with plaque buildup AND it can tip the balance of HDL vs. LDL cholesterol in the direction of GOOD.

There are three types of foods that will help lower your LDL cholesterol, increase your HDL cholesterol and therefore bring your cholesterol ratio back into a healthy balance.

1. **High Fibre Foods** – There has been discussion around foods like oatmeal being fantastic for lowering cholesterol, but did you know it's not so much just oatmeal but the soluble fibre in the oatmeal that improves cholesterol? It's best to aim for 5-10 grams of soluble fibre each day to reduce the absorption of cholesterol into your blood stream. If you don't like oatmeal don't fret, other foods high in soluble fibre are great as well.



Beans, apples, strawberries, Brussel sprouts, sweet potatoes, broccoli, pears and carrots are all great examples.

2. **High Quality Fats** – You may be skeptical about this one, but fats are highly anti-inflammatory when you consume high quality healthy sources. Omega 3 fatty acids found in wild caught fish are great examples of fats that improve your cardiovascular health and therefore reduce possible plaque buildup in the arteries. Nuts and seeds, olive oil and the ever-popular **Continued on top right column...**

...Cholesterol Continued



avocado is not only a source of healthy fat but it's also high in soluble fibre!

3. **Foods that Reduce LDL Cholesterol** – There are some foods that are just plain fantastic for the effect they have on lowering LDL levels in the blood. By adding these foods regularly, it is hoped that you too will see the results! Asparagus, blueberries, cooked tomatoes for lycopene, as well as dark chocolate (must be >70% cocoa) all have shown to improve LDL numbers. There are chemicals found in these foods called sterols and flavonoids that work with the chemistry of the body to improve health.

I should mention that lifestyle plays a big part in the balance of good versus bad cholesterol as well. The more activity you get the better your cholesterol balance. Movement and gentle exercise can help improve cholesterol numbers, so make sure you are getting out and moving your body for 30 minutes each day!

To Detox or to Not Detox Continued from page 2...

Hydration! Good clean water is essential for flushing the liver and kidneys, our primary detox organs. Drinking enough water keeps your intestines smooth and flexible. It also helps keep the food you eat moving through your intestines.

Fermented Foods! Sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, miso and tempeh are all foods to consider adding to your diet. Fermenting brings foods to life - literally! Through the act of fermentation, millions (some reports say trillions) of beneficial - live - bacteria are formed. It's these beneficial bacteria that support our health in so many ways. Read more about fermented foods on my [blog](#).

Show your liver a little love! Many foods and herbs can help your liver to cleanse. Bitter herbs like dandelion and milk thistle are top on this list. These can be found as a supplement, tea or as a prepared tonic commonly called a Liver Flush. Warm lemon water in the morning is one of those daily habits that I mentioned earlier that helps build a strong foundation for health.

Self Care! There was a time, not so long ago, when soaking in a tub, enjoying a nourishing face mask or curling up with a cosy blanket and a good book were considered indulgences. Thankfully we now realize that self-care is not a luxury, but a necessity for our health and well-being. When it comes to detoxing and cleansing, the skin is a great place to start. One of the easiest ways we can show our skin a little love is with the centuries old practice of dry brushing. Dry brushing helps exfoliate dry winter skin and helps detoxify by increasing blood circulation and promoting lymph flow and drainage. Wondering what dry brushing is all about? Read an article by the Wellness Mama [here](#).

We've just come through the season of indulgence, a time when we are eating more salt and sugar, maybe more alcohol and probably moving our bodies less. But if we adopt the 80/20 concept of living life and don't believe that health comes with an all or nothing mentality, then a little indulgence over the holiday season is ok. Good food is more than nourishment...it is social, cultural and definitely something to be enjoyed!



Enjoy your love of food ...with food that loves you back

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