



THE HEART
AND STROKE
FOUNDATION
SOUTH AFRICA

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FATS AND CHOLESTEROL

You may have heard the terms “lipids” and “cholesterol” used interchangeably, and assumed they meant the same thing.

Cholesterol is a type of lipid, just as fats are. However, unlike fat, cholesterol can't be exercised off, sweated out or burned for energy.

Our bodies have the ability to make all of the cholesterol needed for proper functioning, but most people also get cholesterol from foods. Different foods vary in the amount of cholesterol they contain. Only animal products, including meat, chicken, fish, eggs, organ meats and high-fat dairy products have cholesterol; plant-based products may contain fat, but they do not contain cholesterol.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance and is essential to every cell in the body. We need cholesterol to make certain hormones and it is part of a chemical called bile, which helps to digest fats.

Cholesterol is actually part lipid, part protein. This is why the different kinds of cholesterol are called lipoproteins.

Low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol is known as “bad” blood cholesterol, and functions to deliver cholesterol to cells throughout the body and can be deposited as “plaque” on artery walls.

High density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is known as “good” blood cholesterol, and functions as a vehicle in the blood to remove cholesterol waste from the body via the liver.

Fat is also a necessary component of a healthy diet. It is a part of every cell in the body and makes up about 60% of the brain. Fat is essential in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K and also makes up parts the hormones.

There is not a single type of fat.

Triglycerides are the primary form of dietary fat found in the body, and may contain a combination of three fatty acids: saturated fatty acids (SFAs), polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), or monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs).

Essential fatty acids cannot be not produced by the body and must be obtained from the diet; these include omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, both polyunsaturated fats.

Trans fats are derived from partially hydrogenated fats and mimic the function of saturated fatty acids in the body. They may increase risk for heart disease, and are most often found in processed foods and fast foods.

Research shows that the amount and type of dietary fat consumed can affect blood cholesterol levels. Dietary fat, especially saturated (from animal products) and trans fats, may raise blood levels of total and LDL cholesterol. Replacing some saturated fats with polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats (especially olive and canola oil) can help lower blood cholesterol.

Keep in mind, however, that dietary cholesterol does not have as much of an effect on blood cholesterol as saturated fat. It is important to regulate one’s intake of dietary fat in order to regulate blood LDL and HDL cholesterol levels. A high level of total cholesterol is not healthy for the heart and can increase your chances of cardiovascular disease.

Heart Healthy meal from Cooking From The Heart Recipe Book 2

Serves

4

Ready in

1 hour

WEEKEND OVEN-ROASTED VEGGIES

This is a delicious, warm, vegetarian breakfast and the veggies are very versatile. See the tips below.

- 2 tbsp (30 ml) canola or olive oil**
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) red wine or balsamic vinegar**
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) dried mixed herbs**
- ½ tsp (2,5 ml) salt**
- lemon juice and black pepper to taste**
- 2 onions, cut in thin wedges**
- 3 baby marrows, cut in thick slices**
- 3 large tomatoes, cut in wedges**
- 1 green or red pepper, cut in slices**
- 3 large spinach leaves, shredded**
- 4-8 eggs**
- 4 slices wholewheat bread, toasted**
- large handful of fresh basil or parsley leaves (optional)**
- 1 avocado, sliced (when in season)**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 200 °C. Mix oil, vinegar and dried herbs in a large bowl. Season with half the salt, lemon juice and pepper.
- 2.** Add all the veggies, except the spinach and mix well to coat with the oil. Place in a single layer on a large baking tray.
- 3.** Roast for 20 minutes or until the veggies are golden brown and cooked. Stir in spinach and roast for another 5 minutes to heat through.
- 4.** Meanwhile, heat a very thin layer of oil in a frying pan. Fry eggs over a medium heat until cooked to your preference. Season with the remaining ¼ tsp (1,2 ml) salt.
- 5.** Serve spoonfuls of veggies on toast. Place an egg (or 2 for a more filling breakfast or brunch) on top and season with pepper. Garnish with herbs and serve immediately with slices of avocado.

Tips

- 1.** Serve these veggies as a side dish with meat, fish or sausage or stir in a tin of chickpeas for a vegetarian meal. Left-overs are perfect for a lunch box.
- 2.** If you enjoy an egg with a runny yolk, the yolk will be extra 'sauce' on the veggies.
- 3.** Make a double batch of the veggies and use some for supper, tossed into pasta.
- 4.** If you don't want to serve the veggies with eggs, heat a tin of pilchards in tomato sauce and serve on the veggies.

