

## CHOLESTEROL INFORMATION SHEET

### BACKGROUND

Cholesterol is a fatty-like substance found in the bloodstream. The liver manufactures all the cholesterol you need, but we also receive cholesterol from the foods we eat. This is called dietary cholesterol. Some cholesterol is necessary for your body to function properly, but too much cholesterol can build up fatty deposits in the arteries and eventually narrow the vessels and increase your risk for heart disease.

### WHERE IS CHOLESTEROL FOUND?

Cholesterol is found in all animal products such as eggs, milk, cheese, beef, poultry, fish and baked goods containing egg yolks. Fats from plant sources such as corn oil, cottonseed and safflower oil contain no cholesterol.

**In order to lower your cholesterol, the total saturated fat intake must be lowered.** Saturated fats have the greatest effect on blood cholesterol. (Saturated fat means that it is hard at room temperature) Saturated fats include poultry fat, meat fat, butter and milk fat, coconut and palm oil. Monosaturated and poly unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature. These fats tend to lower cholesterol levels. Omega 3 fatty acids found in cold water fish such as sardines, salmon, rainbow trout, herring, mackerel and tuna have been found to lower cholesterol.

**There are two kinds of cholesterol in the blood.** (HDL) or high density lipoproteins, which seem to carry the cholesterol away from the heart and tissues and is called the “good cholesterol”; and (LDL) or low density lipoproteins, which seem to help deposit the cholesterol on the artery walls and are called the “bad cholesterol”. If you have high HDL and low LDL, you may be at lower risk for heart disease.

### Cholesterol Testing

We first test for total cholesterol. If your cholesterol is elevated, we may do a special test for HDL and LDL to assess your risk of heart disease.

**Your total cholesterol should be less than 200, and your LDL cholesterol less than 130.**

If your cholesterol is increased:

- Decrease fats in your diet
- Increase exercise
- Increase fiber in your diet

### Exercise

Increasing your exercise to thirty minutes, 3-4 times a week, may decrease your cholesterol by 10-15%

### **Diet**

- Fats should be no more than 20-30% of your total calories, or approximately 24 grams/day. Decrease, or eliminate consumption of all foods high in saturated fats. Limit cholesterol intake to 300 mg/day.
- There are many cookbooks that include low cholesterol diets and menus that might be helpful. They are found at the local bookstores or libraries.

### **Low Cholesterol Foods**

Fish, chicken, lean meats, dried peas, beans, skim milk, low fat cottage cheese, low fat yogurt, skim cheeses, fresh fruits, fruit juice, vegetables, whole grains, tortillas, oats, cereals, pasta, rice, potatoes.

### **Foods to Avoid**

Whole milk, ice cream, sour cream, heavy creams, fatty beef (corned beef, hamburgers, bacon, sausage, pork, lunch meats), cheese, fast foods, fried foods, packaged dinners, baked goods (cookies, cakes, doughnuts and croissants), gravy, coconut and palm oil, butter, creamy salad dressings, non-dairy creamers, any processed food containing coconut or palm oil.

### **Helpful Hints**

Use non-stick pans. Trim all visible fat. Use smaller portions of meat. Broil, bake or barbecue meats. Use margarine, not butter. Use butter buds or Molly McButter for butter flavor. Use lower fat salad dressings. Snack on plain, air-popped popcorn. Decrease baked goods. Increase fruits, vegetables and grains. Use nonfat milk instead of whole milk. Eat no more than 2 eggs per week. Do not eat fast foods. Do not eat fried foods. Read all labels carefully. Exercise aerobically 30 minutes, 3-4 times per week (swimming, biking, walking, running, jogging, dancing, rowing, cross country skiing, jumping rope).

**In addition to the above information, the American Heart Association is an excellent resource organization for information about high cholesterol. They have several pamphlets that can be very helpful. Also, there are any number of books that are sold in the local book stores specifically on elevated cholesterol. These can be found in the Health sections. The library is another resource for gathering ideas and information.**