

# Foods to Help Manage Cholesterol

18 Fruits, Vegetables, Proteins, Nuts, Seeds & Grains That Support Healthy Levels

Managing cholesterol isn't about one miracle food — it's about consistently choosing foods that support it across every part of your plate. This guide covers 18 foods spanning fruits, vegetables, protein, nuts, seeds, and carbs, colour-coded by food group, with the actual mechanism behind why each one helps and how to include it.

## Colour Key: Food Group

|        |            |         |      |       |                |
|--------|------------|---------|------|-------|----------------|
| Fruits | Vegetables | Protein | Nuts | Seeds | Carbs & Grains |
|--------|------------|---------|------|-------|----------------|

## The 18 Foods

| Food                             | Group      | Why It Helps Cholesterol                                                                                            | How to Include It                                                                  |
|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Apples                        | Fruits     | Contains pectin, a soluble fibre that binds to cholesterol in the gut and helps remove it from the body.            | Eat with the skin on for the most fibre; a good daily snack.                       |
| 2. Avocado                       | Fruits     | Rich in monounsaturated fats, which can help raise HDL ('good') cholesterol while lowering LDL ('bad') cholesterol. | Add slices to a sandwich, or blend into a smoothie 2-3 times a week.               |
| 3. Oranges / Citrus Fruits       | Fruits     | Provides pectin fibre along with vitamin C, both linked to supporting a healthier cholesterol profile.              | Eat as a whole fruit rather than juice, to get the fibre along with the vitamin C. |
| 4. Bottle Gourd (Lauki)          | Vegetables | Low in fat with a high water and fibre content; a traditional food used to support healthy cholesterol levels.      | Have as juice, or cooked into curries and sabzis a few times a week.               |
| 5. Okra (Ladies Finger)          | Vegetables | Contains soluble fibre and mucilage, which can bind to cholesterol and help the body eliminate it.                  | Cook with minimal oil and avoid overcooking to retain the mucilage content.        |
| 6. Eggplant (Brinjal)            | Vegetables | Contains fibre and nasunin, an antioxidant in the skin linked to supporting healthier cholesterol levels.           | Cook with the skin on wherever possible, in curries or roasted preparations.       |
| 7. Fish (Salmon, Mackerel, etc.) | Protein    | Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help lower triglycerides and support a healthier overall lipid profile.          | Include fish 2-3 times a week as a swap for red meat.                              |
| 8. Soybean / Tofu                | Protein    | Plant protein combined with isoflavones has been linked to modest reductions in LDL cholesterol.                    | Use tofu in stir-fries, or soybean chunks in curries a few times a week.           |
| 9. Legumes (Rajma, Chana, Dal)   | Protein    | High in soluble fibre and plant protein, both of which support lower LDL cholesterol when eaten regularly.          | Include a bowl of dal or legume curry as part of your regular meals.               |
| 10. Walnuts                      | Nuts       | Rich in polyunsaturated fats and omega-3s, which support a healthier balance of cholesterol in the blood.           | A small handful (4-5 halves) daily, plain or added to oats and smoothies.          |

| Food                                     | Group          | Why It Helps Cholesterol                                                                                                   | How to Include It                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>11. Almonds</b>                       | Nuts           | Monounsaturated fats and vitamin E support healthy cholesterol levels and reduce oxidative stress on blood vessels.        | A small handful, soaked overnight and eaten in the morning.                                  |
| <b>12. Pistachios</b>                    | Nuts           | Contains plant sterols, compounds that structurally block some cholesterol absorption in the gut.                          | A small handful as a snack; shelling them also naturally slows down overeating.              |
| <b>13. Flax Seeds</b>                    | Seeds          | Combines soluble fibre and omega-3s (as lignans), both linked to lower LDL cholesterol.                                    | Grind and sprinkle over curd, oats, or rotis daily for better absorption.                    |
| <b>14. Chia Seeds</b>                    | Seeds          | Forms a soluble fibre gel when soaked, which can bind to cholesterol and support its removal from the body.                | Soak in water or milk for 15-20 minutes before eating; 1-2 tbsp a day.                       |
| <b>15. Sunflower Seeds</b>               | Seeds          | Contains phytosterols, plant compounds that can block some cholesterol absorption in the digestive tract.                  | Sprinkle over salads or curd, or eat roasted as a snack.                                     |
| <b>16. Oats</b>                          | Carbs & Grains | Contains beta-glucan, a soluble fibre that is one of the most well-studied natural compounds for lowering LDL cholesterol. | Have a bowl of oats for breakfast a few times a week instead of refined cereal.              |
| <b>17. Barley</b>                        | Carbs & Grains | Also rich in beta-glucan, similar to oats, and linked to meaningful LDL cholesterol reduction with regular intake.         | Use in soups, or as a partial substitute for rice in some meals.                             |
| <b>18. Brown Rice &amp; Whole Grains</b> | Carbs & Grains | Retains the fibre-rich bran layer that's stripped from refined grains, supporting a healthier overall cholesterol profile. | Swap white rice or maida-based foods for brown rice, millets, or whole wheat where possible. |

**Note:** These foods support healthy cholesterol as part of an overall diet lower in refined carbs, fried food, and excess saturated fat. This guide is for general education, not medical advice — if you have diagnosed high cholesterol, follow your doctor's specific treatment plan alongside dietary changes.