Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC)

The TLC Program is a way to manage your cholesterol—and your risk for heart disease. When you start on the TLC Program, you will be asked to make changes to your diet and to become more physically active.

The three key points of the TLC lifestyle changes are:

1. **Dietary Changes**: what you eat greatly affects your blood cholesterol levels, so a key step in your treatment is to adopt a heart healthy eating plan.
2. **Weight Management**: being overweight increases your chances for having abnormal cholesterol levels which increases your risk for heart disease.
3. **Physical Activity**: physical activity can help you manage your cholesterol to decrease your risk for heart disease.

**TLC Diet: A Heart Healthy Eating Plan**

TLC diet is a cholesterol lowering diet to lower a person’s “bad cholesterol” (low-density lipoprotein - LDL) level and raise their “good cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein - HDL) level enough to reduce their risk of a chronic disease caused by hardening of the arteries, such as a heart attack.

The TLC diet follows these dietary guidelines

- Less than 7% of the day’s total calories from saturated fat.
- 25-35% of the day’s total calories from fat.
- Less than 200 milligrams of dietary cholesterol a day.

**What can you eat?**
The TLC diet recommends that you eat specific amounts of different types of foods. These amounts are sometimes a percentage of your total calorie intake for each day. For examples of foods that you can try, see chart on next page.

- Saturated fat: Less than 7% of total calories (Avoid trans fat. Foods with trans fats include some vegetable shortening, crackers, cookies, and packaged snack foods)
- Carbohydrate: 50% to 60% of total calories
- Fiber: At least 5 to 10 grams per day
- Protein: Approximately 15% of total calories
- Cholesterol: Less than 200mg a day
- Total calories: Balance calories taken in and calories burned to reach and stay at a healthy weight

**Maintaining a Healthy Weight.**

Weight loss can help lower LDL and is especially important for those with added risk factors including high triglyceride and/or low HDL levels. For those with a larger waist (measuring more than 40 inches for men or 35 inches for women) losing weight can lower the risk for developing heart disease.

Check with your health care provider and find out what a healthy weight is for you. If you need to lose pounds, aim for slow, gradual weight loss—a reasonable and safe weight loss is 1 to 2 pounds a week. You don’t have to reach your ideal weight to reap health benefits. If you are overweight, losing even 10 percent of your current weight lowers your risk for heart disease and other health problems.

**Becoming Physically Active**

Becoming physically active is another key part of the TLC Program—it’s a step that has many benefits. Lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for heart disease. It affects your risk of heart disease both on its own and by its effects on other major risk factors. Regular physical activity can help you manage your weight and, in that way, help lower your LDL. It also can help raise HDL and lower...
triglycerides, improve the fitness of your heart and lungs, and lower blood pressure. And it can reduce your risk for developing diabetes or, if you already have the condition, lessen your need for insulin.

You don’t have to run marathons to become physically active. In fact, if you haven’t been active, the key to success is starting slowly and gradually increasing your effort. For instance, start by taking a walk during breaks at work and gradually lengthen your walks or increase your pace. Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, try to get at least 30 minutes of a moderate-intensity activity such as brisk walking on most, and preferably all, days of the week. You can do the activity all at once or break it up into shorter periods of at least 10 minutes each. Moderate-intensity activities include playing golf (walking the course, instead of riding in a cart), dancing, bowling, bicycling (5 miles in 30 minutes), as well as gardening and house cleaning. More intense activities include jogging, swimming, doing aerobics, or playing basketball, football, soccer, racquetball, or tennis.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) diet recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Food group</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lean meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, and dry peas</td>
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<td>Eggs</td>
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<td>Low-fat milk and milk products</td>
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<td>Fruits</td>
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<td>Vegetables</td>
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<td>Bread, cereals, pasta, rice, and other grains</td>
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<td>Sweets and snacks</td>
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