

My cholesterol levels

Use this table to make a record of your current cholesterol levels. Check back after 3-6 months – you'll be surprised at how quickly you can improve your results when following a heart healthy diet and lifestyle.

Date:	My results	Ideal levels*
Total cholesterol		<5mmol/l
HDL-cholesterol		>1mmol/l
LDL-cholesterol		<3mmol/l
Notes		My Goals

*Country specific targets

For further information and advice, visit our website [insert country website]

Why not try Becel pro.activ – a range of spreads, milks, yoghurts and mini-drinks that form part of a healthy diet and lifestyle.



1. Consuming the optimal 2-2.5g of plant sterols daily typically lowers LDL cholesterol by 10% – Katan MB, et al. Mayo Clin Proc 2003 Aug; 78(8): 965-978.
2. Assumes daily intake of three portions of Becel pro.activ foods e.g. two teaspoons of Becel pro.activ spread, 250ml milk and one pot of yogurt, or, alternatively, one Becel pro.activ mini-drink.

DECEMBER 2008

CHOLESTEROL

TAKING CONTROL DURING THE MENOPAUSE





A TIME OF CHANGE

When going through a period of change it can often feel hard to maintain a sense of control. This is particularly the case when these changes directly affect the way you look, feel and act – as can happen during the menopause.



Hot flushes, mood swings and sleepless nights – these are just a few of the symptoms we all commonly associate with the menopause. The truth is, every woman will experience the menopause differently.

One thing we all do have in common during this time is the changes that are taking place inside our body.

What's happening in my body?

During the menopause, a woman's estrogen* levels drop, triggering a number of changes to the body – most of which we would never be aware are even occurring. One change that is important to be aware of is the rise in cholesterol levels. It is also one change that it is possible to control through simple diet and lifestyle changes.

Raised LDL (bad) cholesterol is an important side effect of the menopause; and is strongly linked with heart health problems. It is also very common – affecting nearly 1 in 2 women aged 55+.

Why haven't I heard about it?

You're not alone! Three quarters of women aged 45-65 don't know that raised cholesterol is linked to the menopause.

In fact, in a recent survey,** of almost 1000 women across Europe, only 23% mentioned heart disease as a concern and even fewer, only 10%, mentioned cholesterol. This is despite the fact that women's risk of heart disease actually increases four-fold in the first 10 years after the menopause.

You can take control

You'll be pleased to hear that there is some good news about raised cholesterol – we can do something about it.

Unlike a lot of the other symptoms we experience during the menopause, raised cholesterol is something we can control. Start by asking to have your cholesterol checked next time you visit your doctor.

*Formerly oestrogen

**Source: Taylor Nelson Sofres for Unilever. Survey of attitudes to the menopause and cholesterol. August 2007.





SO WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a white waxy substance found in every cell of our bodies. We make most of it ourselves in the liver and a small amount comes directly from cholesterol found in some foods such as eggs.

Tell me more...

Cholesterol is often viewed in a negative light, but the fact is, it plays a vital role in the day-to-day functioning of our bodies.

It is needed to:

- form cell walls
- make certain hormones and vitamins
- help our digestive system work properly

It is only when we have **too much** cholesterol in the blood that the negative side effects emerge. A lot of these unwanted effects can be eliminated through controlling the type of cholesterol we have in our bodies, of which there are two forms – HDL (good) and LDL (bad) cholesterol.

When looking after your heart you should aim to keep:

- **LDL**-cholesterol **Low**
- **HDL**-cholesterol **High**



Raised cholesterol is bad for your heart health. It can cause a build up of fatty deposits in your arteries and cause them to narrow, making it more difficult for your heart to pump blood around the body.

HOW CAN I ADAPT MY DIET DURING THE MENOPAUSE?

Diet and lifestyle have a big impact on our cholesterol levels.

During the menopause, in addition to calcium for maintaining good bone health, women need to focus on their heart health and in particular on the type of fats they are eating. This is because fats are closely connected with cholesterol levels – certain fats will raise cholesterol while others actually have the ability to lower it. Also, other food components such as plant sterols can actively lower cholesterol by helping to remove it from the body.



Because we don't need much fat, it's important to make sure that the fat that we do consume is the right type. This not only helps manage cholesterol levels but it also helps in maintaining a healthy weight – an important part of a heart healthy diet and lifestyle.

When it comes to choosing heart healthy foods, it can be all too easy to get led astray. The good thing is, if you're on the lookout it's just as easy to keep on track.

HEART HEALTHY EATING

- If you have raised cholesterol, include foods enriched with plant sterols – proven to significantly lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels
- Use a heart healthy spread, rich in polyunsaturated fats and heart healthy oils, instead of butter
- Limit your intake of full fat dairy products such as cheese and milk, choose low fat dairy products such as skimmed milk or soya alternatives (it is important to continue to include sources of calcium)
- Snack on nuts and seeds instead of cakes and biscuits but watch the portions
- Include oily fish, high in heart healthy Omega 3, such as mackerel and salmon
- Choose wholegrain cereals and oats to increase intake of soluble fibre
- Cook with vegetable oils such as sunflower oil instead of tropical oils and butter

Following these tips will help to keep you and your heart healthy throughout the menopause, and help keep your cholesterol levels in check

THE POWER OF PLANT STEROLS

A large part of following a cholesterol lowering diet is simply making smart choices from everyday foods. However, research has shown that the **single most effective way to lower LDL-cholesterol through diet is to include plant sterols (or stanols)** – nature’s own cholesterol fighter.

Plant sterols are an effective and easy way to **help lower LDL-cholesterol**. They offer benefits when consumed as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle and are also suitable for people with diabetes or those already using cholesterol-lowering medication.

Plant sterols are found naturally in everyday foods like vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, grain products, fruit and vegetables – but in quantities too small to lower cholesterol levels.

HOW DO I INCLUDE PLANT STEROLS IN MY DIET?

Eating 2-2.5g of plant sterols daily is proven to significantly lower LDL-cholesterol by up to 15% when combined with the move to a healthy diet. Becel pro.activ foods contain plant sterols. The range includes a great choice of foods to reach this optimal daily intake:

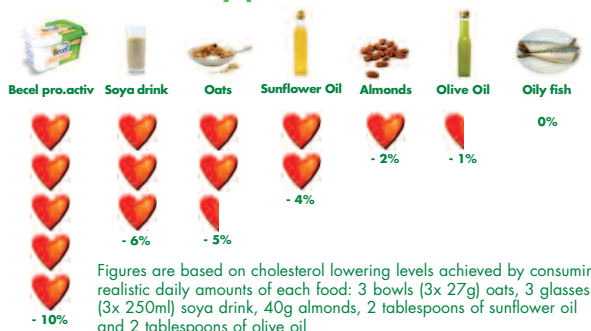
1 Becel pro.activ ‘one-a-day’ yoghurt mini-drink;
or 3 portions of Becel pro.activ foods:

- a 10g portion / 2 teaspoons of Becel pro.activ spread (enough to spread on 2 slices of bread at lunchtime)
- one 250ml glass of Becel pro.activ milk drink (at breakfast)
- one pot of Becel pro.activ yoghurt (125ml pot as a dessert with dinner)

How does Becel pro.activ compare to other cholesterol lowering foods?

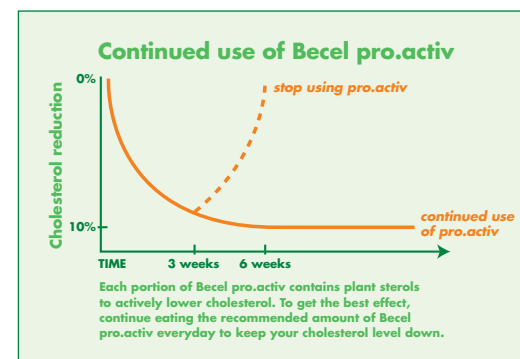
There are a number of foods that can help lower cholesterol when consumed on a regular basis such as oats and soya; however no food or ingredient is more effective than Becel pro.activ for lowering cholesterol.

Foods scientifically proven to lower cholesterol



What happens if I stop using them?

If you want to keep your cholesterol at its new, lower level you need to use Becel pro.activ foods consistently, on a daily basis, as part of a healthy, balanced diet and lifestyle. Missing out on Becel pro.activ foods for a day or two won't matter too much but if you stop using Becel pro.activ your cholesterol will gradually return to its original levels within 3-4 weeks.



Know your heart age

Becel’s Heart Age Tool is a simple and effective way to tell you how healthy your heart is. If you’re already on the right track or could do with some useful hints and tips on how to improve heart health, visit [insert website] for more information and do something good for your heart.

If you are concerned about your cholesterol, or taking medication to lower your cholesterol, seek advice from your health care professional about other ways diet and lifestyle changes can help to keep your heart healthy.

A heart healthy checklist to managing cholesterol and the menopause:

Often there’s no need to make radical changes, just ensure all the basics are in place.

A heart healthy diet fits hand in hand with a heart healthy lifestyle:

- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight and shape
- ✓ Include at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise in your daily routine – it can be as simple as walking home from work
- ✓ Learn how to control stress, and more importantly, take some time out to relax
- ✓ Keep a sensible limit on alcohol consumption – more than one or two glasses of wine every day can be detrimental in the long run
- ✓ Avoid smoking
- ✓ Get your cholesterol checked
- ✓ Know your heart age