Healthy Cholesterol

Cholesterol in the Body

~ Your body needs cholesterol to make hormones such as estrogen and progesterone in women and testosterone in men and stress hormones such as cortisol.

~ Cell membranes such as those in the brain are made from cholesterol.

~ Cholesterol is also used to make bile, a digestive fluid that is produced by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. The body needs bile to digest foods that contain fat.

~ A special form of cholesterol found in the skin has the ability to change into vitamin D when exposed to sunlight.

~ When cholesterol is measured in a blood test it is called a lipid panel. A lipid panel measures total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and triglycerides. HDL cholesterol is considered “good” cholesterol because it helps the body get rid of LDL cholesterol, which is known as “bad” cholesterol. High levels of LDL cholesterol can double your risk of having a heart attack. Strategies for healthy cholesterol balance included reducing LDL and Increasing HDL.

~ Triglycerides are a type of fat (lipid) also found in your blood. Triglycerides in the blood are made in the liver from excess sugar which has not been used for energy. Triglycerides are stored in your fat cells and released for energy between meals. Eating more calories than your body can use for energy contributes to higher triglycerides.

~ Two types of cholesterol:
  - Blood, or serum, cholesterol—this type circulates in the blood and is mostly made by the body.
  - Dietary cholesterol—this type comes from animal foods.

What supports or weakens Healthy Cholesterol:

~ Eating Habits such as soluble fiber, beneficial fats, plant sterols and other naturally occurring nutrients in the diet. (Links to Support for Healthy cholesterol)

~ Stress: Activation of the fight or flight response (Links to Support for Healthy cholesterol)

~ Blood sugar and Insulin Balance (Links to Support for Healthy cholesterol)

~ Lack of exercise