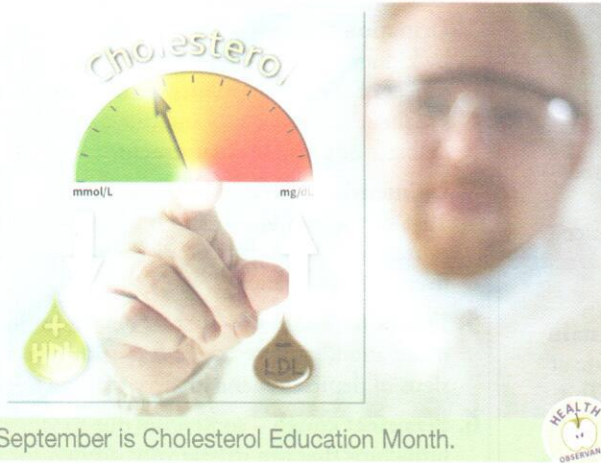


# TH TOP HEALTH®

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter.

SEPTEMBER 2014



September is Cholesterol Education Month.

## 4 Ways to Raise Good Cholesterol

Healthy high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol can help strengthen your heart. *The good news?* You may be able to raise it with lifestyle habits.

**Exercise more.** Cardio exercise is best for boosting HDL. Aim for 5, 30-minute sessions of moderate-intensity activity per week, such as brisk walking. Or do 3, 25-minute segments of vigorous-intensity activity, such as aerobics. Any activity that raises your heart rate is beneficial.

**Lose excess weight.** Losing 5% to 10% of your current weight can raise HDL and improve your blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

**If you smoke, quit.** This will raise your HDL levels and help your heart significantly. Your health care provider can help you decide if cessation aids are best for you.

**Avoid trans fats.** They lower HDL and are in some processed foods and fried fast foods. Unsaturated fats in vegetable oils as well as foods containing omega-3 fatty acids (such as salmon) are heart friendly.

If you don't know your HDL level, ask your provider for a baseline cholesterol test.

HDL Levels	POOR	BETTER	BEST
Men	Below 40mg/dL	40-49mg/dL	60mg/dL and above
Women	Below 50mg/dL	50-59mg/dL	60mg/dL and above

## Medical Warning Signs

By Diane McReynolds, Founder, Personal Best Healthlines

Your body sends you signals every day that warn you of potential health problems.

Being able to recognize potentially serious symptoms – such as unexplained weight loss or lingering depression – can mitigate problems and even save your life.

Could they be related to serious conditions? Learn to spot warning signs and get them checked by your health care provider without delay.



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{ "Health and cheerfulness naturally beget each other." – Joseph Addison }

## Fitness Breaks for At-Home Workers



Working from your home offers you a distinct fitness advantage. To start with, you can use the time saved by not commuting for a regular exercise routine. Morning, noon or night, take your pick.

And why not fit in a few physical activity breaks during your workday? Exercise offers so many benefits: It increases your stamina, reduces stress and muscle tension, and improves concentration.

Leave your work area when you take a break. Don't sit at your desk and check email or social media. Standing up and walking around increases blood circulation and improves your comfort level throughout the day.

If possible, schedule a 3-minute time-out from sitting every 30 minutes. Prolonged sitting stresses your spine. Give your eyes, neck, hips, wrists and shoulders a break – get up and move around.

Walk outside for 10- to 30-minute breaks to refresh your mood, boost energy and raise productivity.

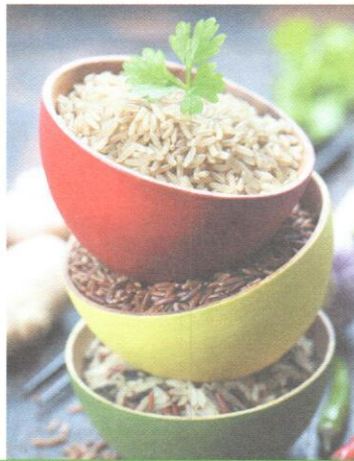




# Carbohydrates: Highs and Lows

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

From low-carb diets to gluten-free living, carbohydrates are a much-maligned nutrient. That's too bad, since carbs are the brain's main source of energy, and the Institute of Medicine recommends a minimum intake of 130 grams a day. That's why it's vital to learn which carbs are the healthiest.



## Choose more:



**The best carbs come from high-fiber, unprocessed foods.** Whole grains, such as brown rice, quinoa (keen-wa) and oats, are better than refined white rice and white flour. Great choices also include fruits, vegetables and legumes.

**Fiber-rich carbs are vital because fiber helps sustain normal cholesterol levels.** Plus, fiber slows the rate at which the small intestine absorbs carbohydrates. This prevents major highs and lows in your blood sugar levels, and helps reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes.

## Choose less:

Yes, foods made from refined sugars and grains taste good, but they contain carbs that are less filling than their fiber-rich cousins. The body absorbs refined carbs relatively quickly, increasing blood sugar and triggering a release of insulin. An hour or 2 after eating, hunger returns and you crave more carbs. It's a vicious cycle.

**Good to know:** Overeating refined carbs can lead to weight gain – a precursor to heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. So, swap your apple juice for a whole apple, skip the soft drinks and opt for whole grains most often.



**Did you know?** September is Whole Grains Month. Celebrate by trying a new whole grain every week.

## Just for Guys: Prostate Health



September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.



More than 230,000 new cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed each year in the U.S. Scientists have yet to learn how to prevent prostate cancer – other than to protect your health in general:

1. **Eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables each day.** Get at least 2½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit per day. **Tip:** Eating cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, broccoli and radishes, has been shown in studies to reduce prostate cancer risk.
2. **Adopt a low-fat diet.** Select leaner cuts and small servings of meat (1 serving equals 3 ounces, about the size of a card deck), avoid fatty snacks and choose low-fat dairy foods.
3. **Lose excess weight.** Being obese increases your risk.
4. **Exercise aerobically most days of the week.** Check with your health care provider first if you have high blood pressure or other health complications.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) advises **normal-risk men** to consult their health care provider about prostate cancer screening by **age 50**. If you are African American or you have a first-degree relative with prostate cancer, see your provider at **age 45**.

The ACS recommends **age 40** for men at highest risk – those who have more than 1 first-degree relative who had prostate cancer at an early age.

**Discuss the uncertainties, risks and potential benefits of screening** with your provider before you decide to get screened for prostate cancer. And ask about other steps you can take to reduce your risk in addition to the ones listed above.



Smart Moves toolkit is at [www.personalbest.com/extras/Sept14tools](http://www.personalbest.com/extras/Sept14tools).

Next Month: Food Habits Everyone Needs