

# Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!



September 2008 Newsletter

## Cholesterol Education Month

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Has your doctor or other healthcare professional ever told you that your cholesterol is too high? Many older Americans have high blood cholesterol. High cholesterol has been linked to an increased risk for heart attack and stroke. About 75-80% of people who have a heart attack or stroke are older adults. In Georgia, these ailments are more common than in many other parts of the country.

Monitoring your blood cholesterol helps to prevent heart attacks and strokes. Everyone should have their blood cholesterol checked at least once every 5 years or even more frequently if at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

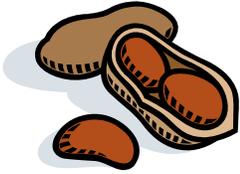
Your cholesterol readings will include LDL, HDL, and total blood cholesterol levels. LDL cholesterol is often called “bad cholesterol” and is linked to an increased risk for heart attacks and strokes. To minimize this risk, try to keep LDL cholesterol **less than 130** mg/dL. If you have diabetes *or* have had a heart attack, keep LDL cholesterol

levels **less than 100** mg/dL. If you have *more than* one risk factor for heart disease, such as diabetes *and* a previous history of a heart attack, aim for an LDL cholesterol level of **less than 70** mg/dL.

HDL cholesterol, often called “good cholesterol,” helps to clean up your arteries and prevent heart attacks and strokes. Ideal HDL cholesterol levels for healthy people *and* for those with diabetes are **greater than 45** mg/dL. However, if you have had a heart attack, your HDL levels can be **greater than 35** mg/dL. Aim for total cholesterol levels of **less than 200** mg/dL.

If your blood cholesterol levels are high, don't be discouraged! There are many ways to lower your total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol levels. One way is to follow a heart-healthy diet. Aim for less than 300 mg of cholesterol per day from foods and beverages. If you already have high cholesterol, then aim for less than 200 mg of cholesterol per day. Items naturally high in cholesterol include: full fat dairy products and cheeses, high fat cuts of meat (especially

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red meats), and other high fat animal products. Instead of eating these foods, select “lean” meat products, such as lean beef, and 1% or non-fat dairy products.

## DIET TIPS:

- Another way to lower your LDL and total cholesterol is to eat a diet low in saturated fats and *trans*-fats. Limit *saturated fat* to less than 7% and *total fat* to less than 30% of your daily intake.
- *Avoid* high-fat meats, dairy products, and pastries, and check the labels of processed snacks to make sure they do not contain any *trans*-fats.
- To *minimize* the amount of these fats, choose low-fat meats and dairy foods, or try getting some of your protein from plants foods. Many nuts and fish are low in saturated fat and high in healthy fats, so try adding these foods to your diet.
- A colorful way to lower your LDL and total cholesterol levels is lots of fruits and vegetables! They are high in fiber, low in cholesterol, and have very little fat. Follow these tips to help keep LDL and total cholesterol down and heart health up!

## For more information, see:

The American Heart Association

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

Live Healthy Georgia: Seniors Taking Charge

<http://www.livewellagewell.info/>

## Honey-Kissed Carrots (Serves 2)

### Ingredients:

- 1½ cups carrots, peeled and sliced (about 3 medium carrots)
- ½ cup water
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon soft tub margarine

### Directions:

1. Place carrot slices and water into a microwave-safe bowl; cover with a paper towel.
2. Microwave on HIGH approximately 6-8 minutes, or until carrots are fork tender, stirring halfway through cooking time (carefully-bowl will be hot).\*
3. While carrots are still warm, add in margarine, honey, and cinnamon and stir to evenly glaze the carrots and melt the margarine
4. Serve warm.

\*Individual cooking times may vary depending on your microwave oven. You can also steam the carrots on the stovetop.