

GVFP NEWS & VIEWS

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CHOLESTEROL

Have you been diagnosed with high cholesterol? Is lowering your cholesterol a goal? The first step is to find out: *What is cholesterol?*

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance made in the liver and other cells and found in certain foods, such as food from animals, like dairy products, eggs, and meat.

The body needs some cholesterol in order to function properly. Its cell walls, or membranes, need cholesterol in order to produce hormones, vitamin D, and the bile acids that help to digest fat. But the body needs only a limited amount of cholesterol to meet its needs. When too much cholesterol is present, plaque (a thick, hard deposit) may form in the body's arteries narrowing the space for blood to flow to the heart. Over time, this buildup causes atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) which can lead to heart disease.

Types of Cholesterol

Cholesterol travels through the blood attached to a protein -- this cholesterol-protein package is called a lipoprotein. Lipoproteins are classified as high density, low density, or very low density, depending on how much protein there is in relation to fat.

- Low density lipoproteins (LDL): LDL, also called "bad" cholesterol, can cause buildup of plaque on the walls of arteries. The more LDL there is in the blood, the greater the risk of heart disease.
- High density lipoproteins (HDL): HDL, also called "good" cholesterol, helps the body get rid of bad cholesterol in the blood. The higher the level of HDL cholesterol, the better. If your levels of HDL are low, your risk of heart disease increases.
- Very low density lipoproteins (VLDL): VLDL is similar to LDL cholesterol in that it contains mostly fat and not much protein.
- Triglycerides: Triglycerides are another type of fat that is carried in the blood by very low density lipoproteins. Excess calories, alcohol, or sugar in the body are converted into triglycerides and stored in fat cells throughout the body.

A variety of factors can affect your cholesterol levels. They include:

- Diet: Saturated fat and cholesterol in the food you eat increase cholesterol levels. Try to reduce the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet.
- Weight: In addition to being a risk factor for heart disease, being overweight can also increase your cholesterol. Losing weight can help lower your LDL and total cholesterol levels, as well as increase

HDL cholesterol.

- Exercise: Regular exercise can lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol. You should try to be physically active for 30 minutes on most days.
- Age
- Diabetes: Poorly controlled diabetes increases cholesterol levels. With improvements in control, cholesterol levels can fall.
- Heredity: Your genes partly determine how much cholesterol your body makes. High blood cholesterol can run in families.
- Other causes: Certain medications and medical conditions can cause high cholesterol.

Everyone over the age of 20 should get their cholesterol levels measured at least once every five years.

Your doctor may recommend a fasting cholesterol test, called a lipid profile or a lipoprotein analysis. It will measure your LDL, HDL, and total cholesterol. It will also measure triglycerides.

Doctors recommend your cholesterol stay below 200. Here is the breakdown:

Total Cholesterol	Category
Less than 200	Desirable
200 - 239	Borderline High
240 and above	High

LDL Cholesterol	LDL-Cholesterol Category
Less than 100	Optimal
100 - 129	Near optimal/above optimal
130 - 159	Borderline high
160 - 189	High
190 and above	Very high

HDL Cholesterol	HDL-Cholesterol Category
Less than 40	Increased Risk
Greater than 60	Optimal
240 and above	High

Triglycerides	
Greater than 200	Increased risk
Less than 200	Optimal

A few simple changes can help lower your cholesterol and risk for heart disease:

- **Eat low-cholesterol foods.** The American Heart Association recommends that you limit your average daily cholesterol intake to less than 300 milligrams. If you have heart disease, limit your daily intake to less than 200 milligrams. People can significantly lower their dietary cholesterol intake by keeping their dietary intake of saturated fats low and by avoiding foods that are high in saturated fat and that contain substantial amounts of dietary cholesterol.
- **Quit smoking.** Smoking lowers HDL ("good") cholesterol levels. This trend can be reversed if you quit smoking.
- **Exercise.** Exercise increases HDL cholesterol in some people. Even moderate-intensity activities, if done daily, can help control weight, diabetes, and high blood pressure -- all risk factors for heart disease.
- **Take medication as prescribed by your doctor.** Sometimes making changes to your diet and increasing exercise is not enough to bring your cholesterol down. You may also need to take a cholesterol-lowering drug.

How Is High Cholesterol Treated?

The main goal in lowering cholesterol is to lower your LDL and raise your HDL. There are two key ways to lower cholesterol: eat a heart-healthy diet and take cholesterol-lowering drugs.

Doctors determine your "goals" for lowering LDL based on the number of risk factors you have for heart disease.

- If you have 0-1 risk factor for heart disease, you are at low-to-moderate risk. Lifestyle changes are recommended to keep the cholesterol in check.
- If you have 2 or more risk factors, you are at moderate risk or next-highest risk, depending on what heart disease risk factors you have. Sometimes your doctor will try lifestyle changes, but most of these people require cholesterol-lowering drugs.
- If you have known heart disease, diabetes, or multiple risk factors, you are at high, or very high, risk. These people may require a combination of cholesterol-lowering drugs and lifestyle changes to control their cholesterol levels.

High blood cholesterol affects over 65 million Americans. It is a serious condition and the higher your cholesterol level, the greater the risk. September is National Cholesterol Education Month, a good time to get your blood cholesterol checked and take steps to lower it if it is high. National Cholesterol Education Month is also a good time to learn about lipid profiles and about food and lifestyle choices that help you reach personal cholesterol goals.

Grilled Tuna with Chickpea and Spinach Salad

Calories: 282 | Prep Time: 25 Minutes | Cook Time: 20 Minutes

Ingredients:

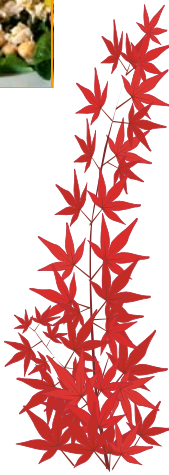
- 1 Tbsp olive or canola oil
- 1 Tbsp garlic, minced (about 2-3 cloves)
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp oregano, minced (or 1 tsp dried)
- 12 oz tuna steak, cut into 4 portions (3 oz each)

For salad:

- ½ can (15½ oz) low-sodium chickpeas (or garbanzo beans), drained and rinsed
- ½ bag (10 oz) leaf spinach, rinsed and dried
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 medium tomato, rinsed and cut into wedges
- ⅛ tsp salt
- ⅛ tsp ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Preheat grill pan or oven broiler (with the rack 3 inches from heat source) on high temperature.
2. Combine oil, garlic, lemon juice, and oregano, and brush over tuna steaks. Marinate for 5-10 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, combine all salad ingredients. (Salad can be made up to 2 hours in advance and refrigerated.)
4. Grill or broil tuna on high heat for 3-4 minutes on each side until the flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork (to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F).
5. Serve one tuna steak over 1 cup of mixed salad.



SEPTEMBER 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 → Closed
4	5 Closed Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10 9-12 Sat. Clinic
11 9-11 Remembrance Day	12	13	14	15	16	17 9-12 Sat. Clinic
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 Closed
25	26	27	28	29	30	

September is . . . National Cholesterol Education Month, National Recovery Month, Self Improvement Month, National ADHD Month, National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, National Hispanic Heritage Month, National Chicken Month, National Courtesy Month, National Honey Month, National Yoga Month, National Piano Month, National Rice Month, National Papaya Month, National Coupon Month, National Mushroom Month, Healthy Aging Month and Classical Music Month

September is the official **National Yoga Month** (a national observance designated by the Department of Health & Human Services) designed to build awareness of yoga's proven health benefits and provide people with actionable guidance and tools to enhance their own well-being. This grassroots awareness campaign inspires both youths and adults to take responsibility for their well-being by focusing on prevention and healthy lifestyle choices.

Yoga isn't just a physical exercise program. It is a scientific system designed to generate greater clarity and harmony in your life. Through regular practice you will likely notice you are stronger, slimmer, and more flexible. But you will also find that you are more patient, mentally sharper, more relaxed and better able to handle stressful situations.



Colorado Rural Health Care Grant

Gunnison Valley Family Physicians is pleased to announce that we have been chosen again this year to receive grant funding.

We are planning to use the funds to update and purchase new equipment for the practice, including spirometry, computer monitors and exam tables. The funds are also going to help defray the cost of the new Medicare and Medicaid EHR (Electronic Health Record) Program requirements for meeting "meaningful use".

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 specified three main components of Meaningful Use:

1. The use of a certified EHR in a meaningful manner, such as e-prescribing/refill automation.
2. The use of certified EHR technology for electronic exchange of health information to improve quality of health care. Including reminders and alerts.
3. The use of certified EHR technology to submit clinical quality and other measures.

The Colorado Rural Health Care Grant Program was established in August 2007 and is funded with \$7.5 million from United Healthcare that will be distributed over six years. "United Healthcare is committed to investing in a healthier Colorado and expanding quality health care services to rural communities throughout the state," said Beth Soberg CEO, United Healthcare of Colorado.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

This is a new section in our newsletter specifically designated to update our patients on happenings or changes within our office...



We have recently had a large boost to our patient numbers and would ask all our patients to please be aware that we are trying to accommodate everyone from acute minor illnesses to physical exams. We are asking that all patients arrive 10 minutes before their scheduled appointments.

Due to high demand of appointment times the **NO-SHOW** fee will increase to \$50 as of October 1, 2011. Please call and cancel your appointment so that someone else may have it.

REMINDER: Due to many factors it is our new policy to ask **EVERYONE** for a new and/or current copy of your insurance card and driver's license.

If you have questions concerning a specific change, please feel free to contact Barb Rider, our Office Manager.