

Be careful of 'bad' fat

Lifestyle modification can lower high blood cholesterol levels.

By Dr ZULFITRI AZUAN MAT DAUD

CHOLESTEROL is a waxy substance that is found in the bloodstream. The body uses cholesterol to produce cell membranes, hormones, vitamin D and bile acids that help us to digest fat.

Basically, the body produces all the cholesterol it needs. However, cholesterol could also come from our diet.

The cholesterol that our body needs is manufactured in the liver and circulated in the bloodstream.

Your doctor can check your cholesterol level by taking a blood sample and having it tested.

Rising prevalence

High blood cholesterol can affect anyone. Based on the latest 2015 National Health and Morbidity Survey, it is estimated that 47.7% of Malaysian adults 18 years and above have hypercholesterolaemia, or high blood cholesterol.

This is a serious matter as high blood cholesterol increases your risk for cardiovascular diseases.

Some of the excess cholesterol in the blood can become trapped in the artery wall. Over time, this build-up of excess cholesterol (known as a plaque) can narrow the blood vessels and make them less flexible.

As the blood vessels narrow or become blocked, oxygen and nutrients may not be able to be carried to the heart muscle, leading to chest pain and heart attack, or even a stroke.

Overweight or obesity is also a risk factor for high cholesterol, i.e. having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater.

Similarly, having a large waist circumference (or too much belly fat) means an increased risk of high cholesterol levels.

That means a waist circumference of more than 90cm for men or more than 80cm for

women, will increase your risk.

Physical inactivity and smoking are two other risk factors for high cholesterol.

Cholesterol indicators

In order to find out what your cholesterol levels are, it is important to have your blood checked. The recommended cholesterol test is the lipid profile.

Make it a point to check your cholesterol levels at least once a year.

Your lipid profile will include information on your total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and triglycerides.

Cholesterol circulates in the bloodstream, but it cannot travel on its own because cholesterol and blood do not mix. Therefore, it

needs special transport molecules known as lipoproteins to circulate in the bloodstream. Your blood cholesterol levels are made up of two main components, namely:

- Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) Cholesterol: Also known as "bad" cholesterol because LDL carries cholesterol to tissues. LDL cholesterol is responsible for obstructing blood vessels and a high count means that you have an increased risk of heart disease.

- High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) Cholesterol: Also known as "good" cholesterol because HDL takes cholesterol from tissues to the liver to be excreted out from the body. Therefore, HDL can help lower your risk of heart disease.

Another component of your lipid profile

are triglycerides. These are another form of fat that are found in the blood. The higher the triglyceride count, the higher your risk of heart disease.

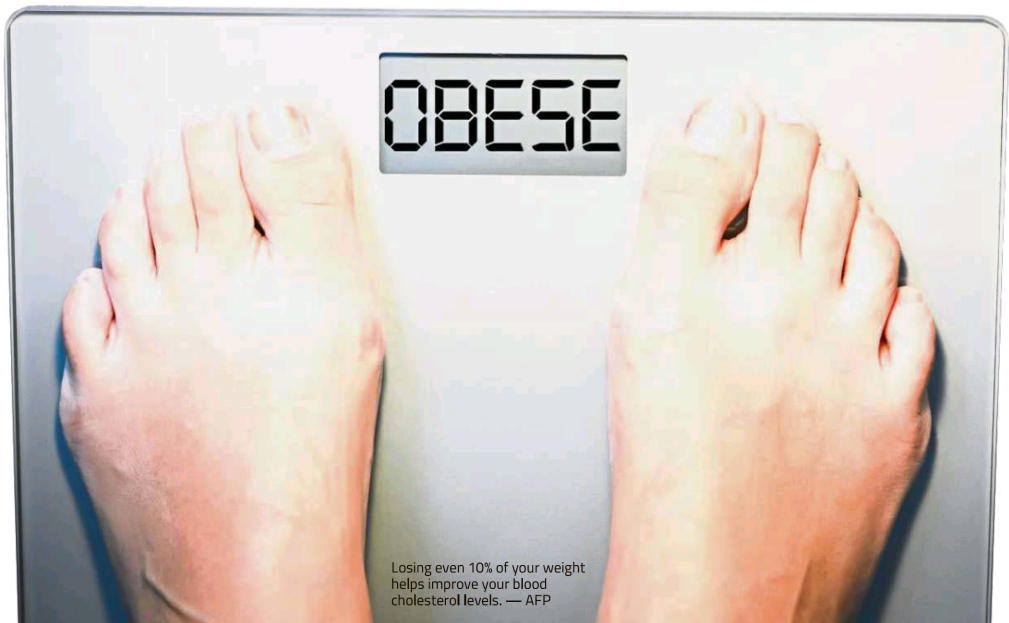
The following figures are what you should aim for if you want to reduce your risk of developing heart disease:

- Total cholesterol – less than 5.2 mmol/L
- LDL cholesterol – less than 2.6 mmol/L
- HDL cholesterol – more than 1.6 mmol/L
- Triglyceride – less than 1.7 mmol/L

Reducing high cholesterol

If you have done your screening and your cholesterol is above the recommended nor-

> TURN TO PAGE 9





QUAKER
1877

BRINGING YOU 140 YEARS
OF OATSOME GOODNESS

WORLD'S No.1 OATS BRAND*

140
YEARS OF
QUAKER
OATS 1877

Beta Glucan
helps to
REDUCE
CHOLESTEROL**



PepsiCo (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. (12246-H) Suite 19-01 & 19-02B, Level 19, The Rinnacie, Parsiaran Lagoon, Bandar Sunway, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.



Serving Suggestion



Aishah Sinclair
Radio Announcer
& Host

* Source: Euromonitor International Limited. Packaged Food 2016 edition, as per food cereals definition, retail value sales, 150+ all retail channels, 2015 data.
** 3g of soluble fibre from oatmeal daily may help reduce cholesterol.