

## **My Kids May Have High Cholesterol – Diets That Help and Foods to Avoid**

High cholesterol is often thought of as an adult and senior health problem. To many people's surprise, kids often struggle with this issue as well. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 7.4% of children and adolescents suffered from high cholesterol in 2015 (the equivalent of 5.4 million kids). This condition frequently is associated with other abnormalities such as overweight and hypertension in children, and more. Feeding your child a healthy diet and avoiding risky foods such as those listed below are two of the best methods for protecting their health.

### **Using the DASH Diet to Lower Kids' Cholesterol**

The DASH diet, also known as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet, is one of the most reliable methods of reducing your kid's high cholesterol levels. As suggested by the name, it can also be used to treat high blood pressure, a condition that is often related to excess sodium in the body. According to the DASH diet, your child's daily meals should be rich with whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and modest servings of carefully prepared meats. Their sodium intake should not exceed 2,300mg per day.

Reducing cholesterol requires diet, exercise and added supplements. Exercise at least 30-60 minutes per day with aerobic activity such as walking, running, or swimming. Fish and fish oil contain nutrients that help at reducing cholesterol production in the body. Eating fish once or twice a week is recommended. Increased fiber intake reduces cholesterol. Fiber can be found in many foods such as vegetables, nuts and fruits. Fiber can also be added through supplement.

Further, a nutrient of particular interest is potassium. Increasing the amount of potassium in your child's diet can do wonders for their elevated blood pressure, as this mineral plays a direct role in reducing sodium levels in the body. The best possible sources of potassium include:

- **Bananas**
- **Apricots**
- **Grapefruit**
- **Cooked spinach and broccoli**
- **Potatoes and sweet potatoes**
- **Mushrooms**

### **Foods Your Child with High Cholesterol Should Avoid**

Above all, your kid should not be eating too many processed foods. Fresh, organic foods have naturally low sodium levels, yet processing adds excess amounts that may harm your child's health. Specific foods to keep out of your kid's diet include:

- **Red meat**
- **Bacon**
- **Sausage**
- **Organs like kidney and liver**

By using the DASH diet and avoiding the foods listed above, you can improve your child's health and prevent the development or worsening of high cholesterol. Speak with your peds heart doctor to determine the precise dietary standards your child should adhere to.