CAN FOOD LOWER CHOLESTEROL LIKE A STATIN?

IN ONE MONTH, IT CAME CLOSE.

28.6%

LDL drop in 1 month on a plant-based "portfolio" diet, vs. 30.9% on a statin plus a low-fat diet: not significantly different (46 adults).

Jenkins et al. · JAMA · 2003 [1]

WHAT DID THEY CHANGE?

- **Plant sterols**
- **Viscous fiber, like oats and barley**
- **Soy foods**
- **Almonds**

All four together, on a diet very low in saturated fat.

WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK YOUR DOCTOR?

1. **Could changing my diet lower my cholesterol?** [1,2]
2. **Can we recheck my cholesterol in 3 months if I try?** [3]
3. **What LDL number are we aiming for?**
4. **If my LDL drops, would you consider lowering my medication?**

13–14%

LDL drop over 6 months when 351 people followed portfolio advice at home, vs. 3% on standard advice (randomized).

Jenkins et al. · JAMA · 2011 [3]

! **Work with your doctor, not around them. Never stop a medication on your own.**

BOTTOM LINE Your LDL listens to your plate, sometimes almost as well as a statin. These trials measured cholesterol, not heart attacks.

MORE OF THE EVIDENCE

- In a one-month trial of 46 adults, LDL fell 28.6% on a "portfolio" diet (plant sterols, soy, viscous fiber and almonds), 30.9% on a low-fat diet plus a statin, and 8.0% on a low-fat diet alone. The portfolio diet and the statin were not significantly different. [1]
- In a 6-month trial of 351 people choosing their own food at home, portfolio diet advice lowered LDL about 13% to 14%, compared with 3% on standard advice. [3]
- Across 19 clinical trials, vegetarian diets lowered LDL by about 12 mg/dL compared with diets that included meat. [2]

Keep in mind: The first study was small and short. Never stop a statin on your own.

WE TAKE ZERO PRESCRIPTIONS.

That's our choice, not a rule for you. Some prescriptions save lives, like antibiotics for an infection. If you are not changing your diet, stay on the medications your doctor prescribes. If you go plant-based, keep up with your blood work. That way your doctor can safely reduce your medications or take you off them altogether.

I'm not anti-medicine. I'm pro-health.

Don't take my word for any of this. Check it with your favorite AI, read the original studies, then bring them to your doctor.

NOTES FROM MY APPOINTMENT

DATE AND DOCTOR

WHAT WE AGREED TO TRY

WHEN WE WILL RECHECK

SOURCES

[1] Jenkins DJA, et al. JAMA, 2003. Effects of a dietary portfolio of cholesterol-lowering foods vs lovastatin on serum lipids and C-reactive protein.
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12876093/

[2] Yokoyama Y, et al. Nutrition Reviews, 2017. Association between plant-based diets and plasma lipids: a systematic review and meta-analysis.
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28938794/

[3] Jenkins DJA, et al. JAMA, 2011. Effect of a dietary portfolio of cholesterol-lowering foods given at 2 levels of intensity of dietary advice on serum lipids in hyperlipidemia.
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21862744/

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