

Ask Leyla: What are some healthy ways to raise my HDL levels?

Q: I've been working on optimizing my cholesterol levels. Right now, my levels are:

Total cholesterol: 202

LDL: 150

HDL: 39

Triglycerides: 67

How can I increase my HDL without also increasing my LDL? I exercise regularly and adhere to a low carb, moderate fat diet. Are there any supplements that would help?

A: Optimal HDL levels would be greater than 50. Mid-70s is a good range to shoot for. There are two ways to increase it: Increase fat intake and exercise.



You're already exercising, which is great. To optimize, aim for 30 minutes a day five to six days a week combining HIIT (high intensity interval training) and strength training on alternate days.

Your moderate fat intake may be lower than you describe. Increase your intake of the following foods to incorporate healthy fats into your diet:

Grass fed beef

Wild Alaskan Salmon

Pasture butter (from grass fed cows)

Extra virgin olive oil (cold pressed)

Nuts and seeds (not roasted in vegetable oil)

Avocado

Remember that even though your LDL is considered high, the particle size is most important.

Supplements to help increase HDL are **bergamot** (that lovely fragrance in Earl Grey tea) and niacin. When taking niacin long-term, it is important to have your liver function monitored by your doctor.

To your health!