



A Monthly Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 6 September 2007

**Know Your Options before obtaining Medical care**

*Resources to assist in obtaining Quality Care in the most appropriate setting.*



*Update regarding procedures to obtaining Alli through your Flexible Spending Account or Health Reimbursement Account.*

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**Cholesterol**

*Proven ways to improve your cholesterol.*

*Quest Diagnostic Reminder*  
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**Alli Update:**



As of 8/1/2007 Wal-Mart and Walgreens has changed the coding for Alli. It is now classified in their systems as a weight loss drug instead of an Over-the-Counter Medication. Due to the new classification, you can not purchase it with your card; however, it will still be reimbursable with a letter of medical need from a licensed physician.

Blue Cross Blue Shield now provides Hospital and Physician Quality Measures and other valuable information to assist you to receive quality care. You may access this data by logging onto [www.mybenefitshome.com](http://www.mybenefitshome.com) and select "Hospital and Physician Quality Measures." Once you do so, you will be directed to the Health Advisor SM. There you can search for hospitals in your area as well as research their experience with specific procedures or other types of care. You can also compare physician profiles, obtain questions to ask your doctor, and find specific information regarding disease states.

You can access Blues on Call™ by phone or on-line to get Health Care Decision Support, talk with a specially trained Blues On Call Health Coach or use the online resources for the information you need to explore treatment options and make health care decisions that are right for you. Call 1-888-BLUE-428 or logon to [www.mybenefitshome.com](http://www.mybenefitshome.com) and select "Your Health," and click on either [Explore Treatment Options](#) or [Talk to a Health Coach](#).

*While logged into [www.mybenefitshome.com](http://www.mybenefitshome.com), don't forget to take your Health Risk Appraisal from Sept 1<sup>st</sup> to Nov 30<sup>th</sup> to get your \$25 Incentive!*

Access April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008 Medical Plan Provisions by logging into [www.webone.outsourceone.com](http://www.webone.outsourceone.com) Knowledgebase and select Plan Document or access through your Human Resources Benefits Portal.

## Lower Cholesterol: 4 Ways to Fast Results

According to experts, there are four basic ways to get your cholesterol where you want it:

- Eating a healthy diet.
- Exercising
- Losing weight
- Taking medicine -- in some cases



### 1. Lower Cholesterol by Eating Right

You've probably heard it before, but foods that are high in saturated fat and -- to a lesser extent -- high in cholesterol, boost your cholesterol levels. These include foods like egg yolks, fatty meats, and full-fat dairy products. Eating a heart healthy diet isn't just about deprivation. In fact, some foods -- eaten in moderation -- can actually improve your cholesterol levels. They include:

- Fatty fish, like tuna and salmon
- Nuts, especially walnuts and almonds
- Oatmeal and oat bran

How much does diet help? It depends.

"The effect of diet has a varying effect on people's cholesterol," says Roger Blumenthal MD, director of the Preventive Cardiology Center at Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore. "Some people get a lot more benefit than others." Blumenthal says diet tends to help people lower [triglycerides](#) and raise good [HDL cholesterol](#), but it's less likely to have a big impact on bad [LDL cholesterol](#).

### 2. Improving Cholesterol With Exercise

Exercise is another way to improve your cholesterol levels. Increased physical activity can have a modest effect on cholesterol, lowering triglycerides (and bad LDL cholesterol to a lesser extent), while boosting your good HDL cholesterol.

### 3. Lose Weight: Lower Cholesterol

Being overweight tends to lead to unhealthy cholesterol levels. Losing weight can lower your bad LDL cholesterol and triglycerides. It also can raise your good HDL cholesterol.

Of course, [weight loss](#) is usually a product of a good diet and exercise. So what if you've already improved your diet and started exercising but *still* need to lose weight?

Then you need to make some further adjustments -- gradually. Once you've reduced your intake of saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol, you can focus on cutting out some calories. In the same way, once you've gotten into an exercise routine, you can step up the intensity to lose some pounds.

### 4. Controlling Cholesterol With Medication

So what happens if diet, exercise and weight loss aren't enough to bring your cholesterol under control? Your doctor might recommend medicine. Medicine may also be a first choice for people who have other risk factors. "If you have [high cholesterol](#) and [heart disease](#) or [diabetes](#)," says Blumenthal, "the evidence is pretty clear that you should be on medication."

Several types of medication can help, including:

**Statins**, like Crestor, Lescol, Lipitor, Mevacor, Pravachol, and Zocor. Statins are usually the first choice for medicine. They block the effects of an enzyme that helps make cholesterol. They also lower bad cholesterol by a whopping 20-55%. They have a modest effect on triglycerides and give a mild boost to your good cholesterol.

**Ezetimibe** (Zetia) is a newer cholesterol-reducing medication that decreases how much cholesterol the body absorbs. It can lower bad cholesterol by up to 25%. Ezetimibe may be combined with a statin to boost the cholesterol lowering effects. Vytorin is Zetia combined with the statin Zocor.

**Most importantly, Talk to your Doctor and Pharmacist to see which option is best for you.**

**Effective September 1, Quest is now the Blue Cross Blue Shield FL In Network Lab. Please call 1-800-377-8448 to locate the nearest Quest Diagnostic Patient Service Center nearest you.**

