

## Margarines to Lower Cholesterol: Do You Need Them?

Researchers at McGill University in Canada report that eating plant sterols and exercising lowers cholesterol, blood pressure, body fat and weight, but you don't have to eat special plant sterol margarine. You can get plenty of plant sterols in nuts, seeds, vegetables and beans. In this study, middle-aged men ate margarine containing sterols four times a day and used stair-stepping machines and stationary bicycles three times a week for eight weeks (American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Dec 2005). Down went the total cholesterol, bad low-density cholesterol, and triglycerides and up went the good HDL cholesterol. Fifty percent of deaths in North America are caused by heart attacks and strokes. Most people can prevent these catastrophes by exercising, eating lots of plants (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and other seeds), avoiding smoking and maintaining a healthful weight. Many of the special cholesterol-lowering margarines are still made with partially hydrogenated oils. I am most offended by products which broadcast on the label that they are Trans Fat Free, yet partially hydrogenated oil is the third ingredient. Remember, the manufacturer can claim zero grams for any amount less than .5 grams per serving. If the serving size is 1 teaspoon or 1 tablespoon, you can accumulate a lot of partially hydrogenated fats by the time you finish the whole container. Butter is high in saturated fats, which you should avoid unless you are a competitive athlete or an active child burning huge amounts of calories. Many people believe that because margarines are made with vegetable oils they are more healthy than butter, but they're not. The vegetable oils are hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated to make them solid or creamy at room temperature. Virtually every brand of solid margarine contains partially hydrogenated oils, the major source of the bad trans fats in North American diets. If the margarine is creamy or liquid, it contains less partially-hydrogenated oils than the stick or more solid margarines, but partially hydrogenated oils are still high on the list of ingredients. If you like butter or margarine and you're trying to lose weight, lower cholesterol or control diabetes, the best products for a hint of butter taste are the spray oils or the butter buds, with 5-10 calories per serving. Better yet, use a little olive oil.

## About the Author

Lead page on nutrition labelling requirements for prepackaged food. Provides links to the Nutrition Facts Table and informational sections.

Source: <http://www.productsherbal.com>