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Algae for Cholesterol Reduction

By [Renata Barber](#), eHow Contributor

Cholesterol is comprised of LDL--the bad stuff-- HDL--the good stuff--and triglycerides, a blood fat lipid that increases the risk of heart disease. When LDL levels are high and too much plaque forms on the walls of blood vessels, this restricts blood flow to the heart and organs setting up heart disease or stroke. However, some studies have shown that algae can reduce LDL levels and triglycerides without lessening the benefits of HDL.

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Blue-Green Algae

According to researchers with the American Chemical Society, the largest scientific society in the world, taking blue-green algae nutritional supplements can lower cholesterol levels in animals.

Aphanizomenon flos-aquae--an algae readily available on the market in most health food stores--is loaded with polyunsaturated fatty acids and particularly well absorbed by animals, according to Christian Drapeau of the company Cell Tech from Klamath Falls, Oregon, which specializes in manufacturing algae supplements. A deficiency of polyunsaturated fatty acids has been linked to cardiovascular disease and various types of cancers.

Currently, there are ongoing studies to determine if the effects of AFA will translate from rats to humans.

Spirulina

Another species of algae that is beneficial to lowering cholesterol reduction is spirulina. Countless studies have been conducted

worldwide on the properties of this algae supporting claims of its cholesterol-lowering properties. Research also found that spirulina aids in healthy cardiovascular functions, treatment of AID/HIV patients and reduces the risks of cancer. Spirulina is a nonmeat protein that contains amino acids and essential nutrients, minus the carbohydrates and fat, that's responsible for high LDL levels. Spirulina also contains gamma-linoleic acid which is excellent for the health of the heart and for lowering triglycerides.

In a study conducted in 1998 by N. Nyaka, published in Nutritional Reports International by Tokai University publications, 30 men with high cholesterol and mild hypertension took spirulina supplements daily for eight weeks and didn't change their usual diet. These men were able to lower their serum cholesterol levels by 4.5 percent within just four weeks, from 244 to 233, reducing LDL levels, (the bad fat) and increasing HDL levels, (the good fat).

Studies conducted in Germany and India on humans showed significant weight reduction, along with lowering cholesterol levels.

However, it is important to remember that spirulina isn't an appetite suppressant, although it can support weight loss. If taken an hour before a meal it can satisfy your appetite and you'll eat less as a result.

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