How to Lower Cholesterol with Dr. Greger's Portfolio Plus Powder Recipes Transcript

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Why LDL Cholesterol Matters

How to Lower Cholesterol with Dr. Greger's Portfolio Plus Powder Recipes Hello, everyone! I thought it'd be fun to do a Dr. Greger in the Kitchen-type video, though I'm not really cooking anything up other than life-saving information.

The number one killer of men and women? Heart disease. The primary driver of our number one killer: LDL cholesterol. No wonder about 100 million Americans are on cholesterol-lowering statin drugs.

When it comes to LDL, the lower the better; so, in addition to whatever drugs you and your doctor may decide upon, ideally, we would all be incorporating any and all safe, simple, side-effect-free solutions that lower our LDL as low as it will go.

Over this extended 16-video series, I've tried to identify every cholesterol-lowering food, herb, spice, and safe supplement to create a portfolio of things to do on a daily or monthly basis to drive LDL as low as possible.

The problem is it's quite a list. I mean, that's great, right? That means there are lots of things we can do to lower our cholesterol. So, you can pick and choose to figure out what works best for you, but if you wanted to try to do it all, how might you go about it?

What I want to show in this video is how I do it. This is not to say it's how you should do it, right? You need to figure out what fits into your life.

I just wanted to share what I've come up with, in case it will give you any helpful ideas. First, we start by reducing or eliminating concentrated sources of the three things that primarily raise our LDL cholesterol: saturated fat, trans fat, and dietary cholesterol.

Building a Cholesterol-Lowering Diet

So, cutting down on meat, dairy, eggs, and processed foods that contain partially hydrogenated oils or tropical oils: coconut oil, palm oil, or palm kernel oil.

It's kind of silly to go out of our way to add all these cholesterol-lowering foods if we are actively, every day, eating cholesterol-raising foods. So ideally, we end up centering our diets around unprocessed plant foods.

But some plants are better than others. I'm looking at you, iceberg lettuce. So, in my book How Not to Die, now in its 10th anniversary edition, I created my Daily Dozen checklist of all the healthiest of healthy foods and habits that I encourage everyone to fit into their daily routine.

For details, you can check it out in your local public library or download the free app: Dr. Greger's Daily Dozen. In the appendix of How Not to Die, I emphasize the importance of a regular reliable source of vitamin B12, vitamin D if you don't get enough sunshine, and a good source of iodine.

You also may want to consider taking a pollutant-free source of DHA. Then, in my last few videos in this series, I tweaked the Daily Dozen for cholesterol lowering, adding and specifying all the things with special cholesterol-lowering properties.

All beans and berries are good, but that tablespoon of black soybeans and two tablespoons of dried barberries appear particularly potent. Fruits and veggies are all great, but we have that special data on apples and artichokes.

Bumping up the ground flax to three tablespoons a day. Then, there's that weird Brazil nut thing, and specific

spices in specific amounts, the psyllium, the sterols.

If any of this is unfamiliar, please go back and watch those videos where I do a deep dive into the data to go through the pros and cons of each, so you can make up your own mind.

I go through all the supplements, why, you know, taking red yeast rice is such a bad idea, the risks and benefits of statin drugs based on your ten-year risk, which I show you how to calculate.

Okay, and then, in my book How Not to Age, I recommended adding to the list of daily recommendations vinegar to boost the enzyme AMPK, coffee to boost autophagy, wheat germ for the spermidine, strawberries and pippali for the senolytic compounds fisetin and piperlongumine, green tea to boost Nrf2 defenses, potassium-based salt substitutes, chili peppers, mushrooms for ergothioneine, purple sweet potatoes, pumpkin seeds, cranberries, nutritional yeast, cocoa powder, and black sesame seeds.

Now, that doesn't include all the cosmetic stuff in the book, like recipes for topical vitamin C and nicotinamide kind of youth serums for your face. That's all up to you.

Daily Dozen Additions for LDL Reduction

Okay, something I did not cover in the book was taurine, but to make up for it, I did a whole webinar on the new evidence to help you decide if taurine is right for you.

And if you're overweight, my book How Not to Diet includes 20 other things you can do to accelerate the loss of body fat. For those of you above your ideal weight, every five pounds lost (2.30 kg) should lower your LDL about two points.

But even without the weight-loss boosters, that's still a lot of stuff. Who's got time to worry about all that? Enter my Portfolio Plus powder. First step, divide all these components into one of three categories: tasty, nasty, and bland.

Let's start with the bland. It all began with ground flaxseed, a light nutty powder that I could sprinkle upon pretty much anything. So, I'd keep a jar on my kitchen counter with a tablespoon scoop to remind me to check off my Daily Dozen box.

Then, with How Not to Age, I started mixing flax and wheat germ, half and half, and so using a two-tablespoon scoop to get a tablespoon of each. And from that, I realized that I did not mind sprinkling two tablespoons of a neutral tasting powder on a meal, any meal.

All right, okay, now if that's the case, and I eat three meals a day, then I have room for six tablespoons of bland powders a day. So, if I'm going to make a month's worth of powder at a time, that's six tablespoons a day times 30 days at 180 tablespoons.

How am I gonna fill up that 180 tablespoons? Okay, let's go back to the lists. The cholesterol-lowering Daily Dozen includes not one tablespoon of flax but three tablespoons of flax a day.

So, three a day times 30 days is 90 tablespoons. So, half of the month's worth of powder, 90 out of the 180 tablespoons, is going to be ground flaxseed, which comes out to be about five and a half to five and three quarters cups (640 – 670 g).

So, let me add that. This is about four. Ah! I'm already spilling. (soft whooshing) That's why the smaller cup would– Okay, so that was one. Let's go one and three quarters here.

Okay. The ants in this house are going to have very low cholesterol. Ah, see, that worked much better. Okay, now the reason I'm using pre-ground brown flaxseed– Why brown? Well, check out my video on brown versus golden flax.

Um, now, why pre-ground? You know, I used to just buy bulk whole flaxseed, grind a big batch in my Vitamix until I read that that might contaminate my flax with billions of plastic particles.

Vitamix does make a stainless steel container, but it's like a hundred bucks. Is it worth it? I don't know. There have been 15,000 papers published on microplastics since my last video series on the subject.

Designing the Portfolio Plus Powder

I have a lot of catching up to do. Stay tuned. In the meanwhile, I've just been using pre-ground flax. By the way, please ignore any and all brand names that I'm using.

Unless otherwise specified, I am literally just using the cheapest sources I've been able to find online. Neither I nor NutritionFacts have ever accepted any money to promote any product from any for-profit company.

Never have and never will. Okay, 90 tablespoons down, versus a little on the counter, ninety to go to make up my 180 tablespoons of bland powder that I'm willing to sprinkle on my meals every month.

What else has a neutral taste? Psyllium. Psyllium is pretty tasteless; so, let's add that to the mix. One tablespoon a day is 30 tablespoons of psyllium husk powder, which is one and three quarters to two cups (140 – 160 g).

Ta-da. Okay, since you'll be getting about a teaspoon of psyllium at each meal, make sure that you also drink a cup of water (240 ml) at least each time.

Okay, we're up to 120 tablespoons, sixty tablespoons to go. In How Not to Age, I noted that just a single daily teaspoon of ground black sesame seeds can drop systolic blood pressures by eight points over placebo, which, if sustained, could reduce our risk of stroke alone by 26%.

So, 30 teaspoons equals 10 tablespoons, or between a half and two thirds of a cup (60 – 80 g). So, we'll throw that in. A little bit more. Okay. Now, ideally, we'd be using raw black sesame seed powder.

Most on the market is toasted, which is much more delicious, but we want to try eating our nuts and seeds raw, because we want to reduce our exposure to advanced glycation end products.

All right, 50 tablespoons to go. What else can we add? Well, if you do not like artichoke hearts or you can't find them frozen in your freezer section– if you can't find any with no salt in the freezer section– you could add five teaspoons of an artichoke extract powder to get 500 mg a day, but I just eat the whole food.

Unfortunately, there's no whole food equivalent to the bergamot extract, but if you don't like taking pills every day, you could open up 15 grams of capsules once a month into the powder.

It's pretty bitter though. I was hoping that a half gram spread over that six tablespoons a day would kind of dilute it enough. I tried that, though still too bitter for me.

But maybe your taste buds are different. The sumac, though, isn't too bad. A half teaspoon a day works out to five tablespoons a month. Um, it has a kind of sour fruity flavor that I don't mind, but if you don't like it, then instead of adding it to the powder, you could just, um, use it however you use your barberries, has a similar kind of tart taste.

If you decide to do taurine, four tablespoons of the pure powder will get you about 1500 mg a day, which you could add to the monthly batch. I've been able to find two bulk sources of phytosterol powder.

You'd need to add four tablespoons to get two grams a day, but as I mentioned in the video, I am skeptical that the pure powder works. So, I take–just take the actual esterified supplement three times a day to get my two grams, but it's expensive, like a dollar a day, though cheaper if you buy it on eBay near their expiration date.

Pro tip. What else can we add? Well, for iodine, I used to make veggie sushi a lot or sushi salad, or in the winter, I

have miso soup with a little arame seaweed, or I'd just sprinkle a half teaspoon of dulse onto my food every day, even though dulse is pretty mild, you know, it just doesn't work with all dishes.

Handling Bitter Supplements with Edible Film

So, normally, I would tell people to stay away from kelp, because we risk iodine overload if we get any more than just a tiny amount, but a tiny amount would be perfect for our purposes here.

This brand has 732 micrograms of iodine per gram; so, if we want to get 150 micrograms a day for a month, two teaspoons spread out over the entire month, and it's diluted enough that you should not taste it.

Now, if you already have a regular source of iodine in your diet, there's no need to do this. I probably don't eat seaweed regularly enough; so, that's why I add it to my mix.

You'll note, though, I'm going to have to shake it really good, right, to evenly distribute it. Otherwise, it kind of just defeats the purpose. And, speaking of which, if you take vitamin B12 three times a day, you only need two microgram doses, whereas if you take it once a day, you need 50; you take it once a week, 2000.

How does that make any sense? Check out my video for the math. But by crushing up one 250 microgram tablet of cyanocobalamin, which is the preferred form of B12, and adding it to the mix, you could theoretically get your two to three micrograms per meal, but that's assuming it's perfectly distributed.

So, if you are gonna try it, I might use a 500 microgram pill. So, I whip out my handy… mortar and pestle here. Doo-doo-doo. (scraping) Ta-da! (clinking) Now, one might argue it's more physiological to get tiny amounts throughout the day, but I looked into it, and I didn't see any downsides of taking daily or weekly doses.

So, the only real advantage of kind of microdosing B12 in this kitchen-sink-type mix is just not having to remember to take your B12 every week. Okay, one less thing to worry about, and it comes out to be, like, ten cents a month, but again, it has to be completely evenly distributed to work.

Okay, so I think that's all the bland stuff; so, the final 44 or so tablespoons is all spermidine in the form of wheat germ. So, that's two and three-quarter cups (315 g).

I would use the big one, but then I'll just spill it all over the place. Let's just go two… Ooh, left-handed, look at that. And three-quarter cups. There we go.

All right. And so, that should get you close to about four milligrams of spermidine a day. Let us shake.

Using the Powders in Everyday Meals

Okay, so, to recap, for a month's worth of the basic recipe, assuming you're adding two tablespoons to each meal, for three meals a day, right, that's 90 tablespoons of ground brown flaxseeds, forty-five tablespoons of raw wheat germ, thirty tablespoons of finely ground psyllium husk powder, ten tablespoons a day of raw, powdered black sesame seeds, and five tablespoons of sumac.

Now, if you're making a different-sized batch, right, just follow a ratio of 18 to 9 to 6 to 2 to 1 for those five ingredients, in that order. In place of some of the wheat germ, you could add four tablespoons of taurine powder, four tablespoons of plant sterol powder, five teaspoons of artichoke extract powder, fifteen grams of bergamot extract, two teaspoons of kelp powder (assuming it has about 700 mcg of iodine per gram), and 500 micrograms of B12.

Then, whoo, we put that all in an opaque airtight container, and… we are set for the month. Ta-da! Okay. So, that is the plain powder. Now, we turn to the louder powder, or as it's called, the "disgust dust." Amla, for example.

Aww. Barf. The stuff is gross. So, what do you do with it? Well, I mean, if you make smoothies every day and you

don't notice it or something, great! Otherwise, how are you gonna get your third of a teaspoon of amla every day?

Dun-da-da-dun! Japanese edible film. Japanese edible film is a… It's gonna be hard to even take it out. They're so thin. They are squares or disks of just pure potato starch.

They're a way to swallow unappetizing powders without tasting them. So, let me see if I can demonstrate here. Take my square, take my third of a teaspoon of amla– I don't think I have a third teaspoon.

I'll just have to wing it here. Where'd my amla go? Here we go. Okay. Doo-doo-doo. That looks like about a third. Ta-da. Okay. Now, what you do with dry fingers, you wrap it up like a wonton, take the corners, right, boo-boo-boo-boo, da-da, okay, wrap it up like a wonton.

Then, take a glass of water. You dip it in the water, and then it kind of self-seals up, and you put it in your mouth. Ta-da, you don't taste a thing.

Okay, now, if you want to try this at home, start small, work your way up. I don't want anyone to choke on it. I'm up to about a teaspoon; so, I use it to take my BAT powder every day.

Black cumin, amla, amla, and my, uh, turmeric. Okay, black cumin, amla, turmeric. My BAT powder. So, a quarter teaspoon a day of the black cumin, a third of a teaspoon a day of the amla, and then a quarter teaspoon a day of the turmeric, or, basically, just a teaspoon a day of a 3-4-3 ratio of black cumin, amla, and turmeric.

Basically, that's what it looks like. Okay, and you put it in your, uh, in your edible film, and you're set to go. Now, there's other ways to swallow unpleasant powders.

You could use prefilled capsules, you could fill capsules yourself with a little capsule maker, or just make a shot, right, you take that teaspoon, put it in a little thing with some water, stir it up, and just drink it down.

I call it the "curry slurry method." Whatever floats your boat. Okay, here's where we ended up. The blend components find their way into my sprinkle-on-meals powder.

The nasty bits go into edible film, and then for the stuff I like, the tasty components, that goes into my regular meal rotation. So, for example, for breakfast, I might have a warm grain, like my cran-chocolate pomegranate BROL bowl, or just some oat groats with defrosted frozen berries.

Lemon balm is in the mint family; so, I mix it in a 1 to 3 ratio with freeze-dried strawberry powder, and I just put a heaping tablespoon of that into whatever I'm having that morning.

I make it chocolatey with cocoa powder, nut seeds, barberries– I got my barberries– some chocolate balsamic vinegar, and, of course, two tablespoons of the Portfolio Plus powder.

So, boom, that's like 17 things checked off, and I've hardly even woken up yet.

Tracking Progress and Final Takeaways

For lunch, I've been doing a lot of kind of Italian recently. So, whole grain pasta dishes like hummac, which is mac and cheese but with hummus instead of cheese.

So, the garlic, savory artichokes and mushrooms pair perfectly well. But, let's say you hate the taste of garlic and instead you cook a lot of Indian.

Okay, fine. Then, you're making BAT powder, right? Make a lot of Middle Eastern? Well, just use the sumac directly in the meals. You don't need to put it in the powder, right?

Same thing with, like, remember the artichoke extract? You can use that instead of actually using artichokes. Then,

in the afternoon, I'll have some green tea.

The apples make a great dessert. The sweet potatoes can be a hearty snack or air fried as fries on the side. It's not something I do every day, but just I want to include them in the list as a reminder to try them out.

You can also get purple sweet potato powder that you can put in smoothies or something to get these bright purple smoothies that kids love. I do my BAT powder in the morning along with a capsule of plant sterol esters, bergamot extract, DHA, and vitamin D.

Then, I take an additional capsule of plant sterols at lunch and dinner along with the two-tablespoon sprinkle of the bland powder. I don't have room in my edible film for the pippali and didn't want to do two films a day.

That would change, though, if the purported benefits do become more than just theoretical. Likewise, if my ten-year risk of heart disease ever crept up to five percent, I would start a statin in a heartbeat, and I'm still waiting on better data for the taurine, but I think it's totally reasonable not to wait.

It all depends on your risk tolerance, both in–in both directions, both safety and potentially missing out on any benefits. Okay, I imagine this video, be a little overwhelming, right?

Look, if all you do is go out and eat an apple once in a while, great, your body, your choice, right? You know I try to keep things simple. You know I hate supplements.

God knows what's in them half the time. But given the evidence that we should try to lower our LDL as much as possible, I wanted to give everyone– lay out every tool I can find so you can mix and match them together to have as much control over your destiny as you want.

To track your progress, you start by getting a free LDL cholesterol test by going to familyheart.org, thanks to the nonprofit Family Heart Foundation.

They just send it to you in the mail. Then, you can have your doctor order tests for you every month to see how you're doing, or if there's a local Quest or LabCorp location near you, you can just order your own tests.

Or, to save time, you can get a little cholesterol testing machine. They use little drops of blood and it gives you a digital readout in a few minutes.

You can check it every week, try out different foods or supplements, and see what works for you. I hope this video helped or, at the very least, gave you some ideas.

From the bottom of my heart to your future even healthier heart, this is Dr. Michael Greger with NutritionFacts.org. Ah. Dropped my spoon.