

Plant sterols and cholesterol

Information for patients and families

What are plant sterols?

Plant sterols are naturally found in plant based foods, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes and vegetable oils. Plant sterol enriched foods have larger amounts of plant sterols added to them. You can also get plant sterols in supplement form.

Why are plant sterols good?

- Plant sterols can help lower your cholesterol by 5 to 8 percent.
- Plant sterols block the absorption of some of the cholesterol in your food.

How much do I need?

- Have 1 to 2 grams of plant sterols per day to help lower your cholesterol.
- Take supplements and foods enriched with plant sterols with a meal. They work best when taken with other foods.

Are plant sterols safe?

- Do not take plant sterols if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Do not give them to children.
- Tell your doctor if you are planning to increase the plant sterols in your diet.

How can I add plant sterols to my diet?

- Include at least one serving of plant sterol enriched foods each day (see the chart below).
- Cook and bake with vegetable oils, instead of butter.
- Enjoy nuts on their own or add them to your salads or yogurt. Aim for ¼ to ⅓ cup of nuts per day.
- Eat whole grains, such as brown rice, barley, quinoa and oats.
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. Canada's Food Guide recommends 7 to 10 servings per day.
- Ask your doctor about taking a plant sterol supplement (see the chart below).

Plant sterol enriched foods and supplements*

Product name	Serving size	Amount of plant sterols
Becel Pro-Activ margarine	2 teaspoons	0.8 grams
Minute Maid Heart Wise juice	250 ml	1 gram
Oasis Health Break CholestPrevent	250 ml	1 gram
Supplements		
Centrum Cardio multivitamin	1 tablet	0.5 grams
Swiss Natural Vegapure	1 capsule	0.65 grams
Nature Made CholestOff Complete	1 capsule	0.3 grams
Life Brand Plant Sterols	1 capsule	0.37 grams

*These are just some examples. Choose the product that is right for you.

St. Michael's cares about your health. For reliable health information, visit our Patient and Family Learning Centre, Room 6-004, 6th floor, Cardinal Carter Wing, or find us online at www.stmichaelshospital.com/learn

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions.

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