LDL Program: Dietary Fats and Proteins

One of the greatest ways to impact your LDL cholesterol levels is through your diet. Dietary fats and proteins are two of the three macronutrients that make up our diet. Choosing the right types of fats and proteins in the diet most often is an important way you can reduce and maintain lower LDL cholesterol levels.

“Good” Fats
These are the healthy fats that should be eaten most of the time
These fats include your mono- and polyunsaturated fats that when eaten in the appropriate quantities can actually reduce your LDL cholesterol. Find these fats in nuts, seeds, fatty fish, and vegetable oils.

“Bad” Fats
These are the fats in your diet that should be eaten least often
Bad fats include trans fats, which when eaten even in small quantities increase your risk of disease. Trans fats are commonly found in processed foods and hydrogenated oils.

Saturated Fats
These dietary fats are best in moderation
While not as damaging as trans fats, saturated fats can negatively impact health and are best consumed in smaller amounts. Saturated fats are found in red meat, dairy, butter, and some plants oils like coconut and palm oil.

Protein
Protein is another important macronutrient that is found in almost all structures and functions of the body including our hair, skin, nails, and the enzymes that power important, life-sustaining chemical reactions. When considering what types of proteins to consume in our diet for healthy cholesterol levels, it is important to think about the entire protein package. When you consume a 4 oz piece of sirloin steak, you receive 33 grams of protein and 5 grams of saturated fat. For this reason, it is important to choose lean proteins, proteins rich in mono- and polyunsaturated fats, and plant-based proteins that also provide more of those “good” fats and less “bad” while still packing a protein-filled punch. Choose proteins like beans, nuts, fish, and poultry in place of red meat most often.

Fill in the Blank
Use the information above to fill in the blank with the right word or phrase!

1. “Good” fats include mono- and ________________ fats.
2. While not as harmful as trans fats, ________________ fats should be eaten in smaller quantities.
3. Trans fats can be found in ________________ and ________________.
4. Saturated fats can be found in ________________, ________________, ________________, and ________________.
5. When thinking about protein sources, it is important to think about the entire ________________.
6. A 4-oz piece of steak contains _____ grams of protein and _____ grams of saturated fat.
7. Plant-based proteins include foods like ________________ and ________________.
8. You should choose lean proteins like ________________, ________________, ________________, and ________________ most often.
9. **BONUS!** A great source of polyunsaturated fatty acids is ________________.

Scan this QR code to complete the post-activity survey and redeem your points for your participation in the Take Charge program!
Answer Key:
1. Polyunsaturated
2. Saturated fats
3. Processed foods, hydrogenated oils
4. Red meat, dairy, butter, some plants oils
5. Protein package
6. 33, 5
7. Beans, nuts
8. Beans, nuts, fish, poultry
9. Salmon