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The Phytosterol Miracle

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In the United States, the ingestion of cholesterol ranges from approximately 200 milligrams (mg) to an alarming 2,000 mg per day. Although we must take in some level of cholesterol each day to maintain optimum health, that level should probably be lower than 300 mg. To put that figure in perspective, a double cheeseburger, fries, and a shake at the local fast-food joint can contain up to 800 mg of cholesterol!

Medical research has shown that approximately 20 to 30 percent of the cholesterol circulating in our blood comes from our diet. So you should monitor your dietary cholesterol intake and keep it low—but that's not always easy.

Bottom line, the only way to avoid cholesterol altogether is to stop eating animal products. But here's the problem: Many of us *don't want* to become vegetarians—or even modified vegetarians. Frankly, I've seen a few strict vegetarians who don't look too healthy. Some of us are definitely hooked on beef, cheese, eggs, liver, lobster, shrimp, chicken, pork and other animal products … and we look forward to eating them. I know I do! They taste good and are rich sources of protein, iron, folic acid, and other important nutrients.

ol in its most harmful form,
zed cholesterol can be a
sk. Meat cannot be stored,
cholesterol. Leanness is not
d to age without creating
s a "healthy food," contains
ls. In fact, turkey ranks the
ent of Agriculture (USDA)
Reference).

oncentration in these foods.
terol, and ***stigmasterol***—are
damage from oxidized
lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad"

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erol, campesterol, and stigmasterol are fatty alcohols that cannot be absorbed
. They so closely resemble the cholesterol (or animal sterol) molecular
at the cholesterol receptor sites in our digestive tracts cannot distinguish one
her. Phytosterols work primarily by inhibiting the body's ability to absorb
esterol. In a recent study, one gram of beta sitosterol reduced cholesterol
y 40 percent. Newer research reported in the *New England Journal of*
owed that LDL cholesterol decreased approximately 14 percent when
were consumed for about one year.

terols work

mistry occurs in the intestine. The plant sterols combine with dietary
ell as cholesterol secreted from bile to form a new, crystalline matrix.
ot be absorbed and is, therefore, excreted as waste. It is also thought that
compete for the cholesterol absorption sites along the intestinal wall,
ently block absorption there as well. Once the plant sterol has wedged
rption site, it blocks absorption of cholesterol, but cannot be absorbed

es of phytosterols are plant foods, such as rice and soybeans, and
the following table:

Phytosterol Content of Various Foods

	(mg/100 g)
n oil	1390
bean oil	327
e oil	232
ne seed	714
ower seed	534
ans	161
w	158
ds	143
beans	127
eans	124
	108

se will assist with the process of reducing cholesterol, trans-
nd soybean oils are toxic to cells, and will cause an even
his is not a new discovery. Research done 50 years ago shows
ble and oil sources interfere with cholesterol absorption. The
cate a convenient way to take enough phytosterols to create
ng cholesterol.