

Shrimp and Health

from Ocean Garden®

There's good news for shrimp lovers. You can eat your shrimp and be heart-healthy too. Research at Rockefeller University Hospital cosponsored by the Harvard School of Public Health¹ confirms that the cholesterol content of shrimp is not a cause for alarm. Numerous other studies reinforce this message: It's the total fat profile of a food, not the food's cholesterol content, that most impacts your cholesterol readings.

Low fat and Lean

Shrimp is low-fat and lean - and always has been. A typical serving (3 ounces cooked shrimp) has only 80 calories. Plus, "skinny" shrimp have only one gram of total fat per serving, less than a skinless chicken breast. Here are some specifics from the Rockefeller University research: Participants, all healthy adults with normal cholesterol levels, were rotated through three diets. They were served each of these diets for three weeks: a low-fat baseline diet, a diet high in eggs, and a diet based on 10 ounces of shrimp per day.

Shrimp and Cholesterol

Although shrimp is relatively high in cholesterol, the diet high in steamed shrimp did not adversely affect the lipoprotein file in people with normal blood cholesterol levels. In fact, cholesterol ratios of "bad" cholesterol (LDL) compared to "good" cholesterol (HDL) improved on the high shrimp diet. This ratio of LDL to HDL is an indicator commonly used by doctors to assess the risk of heart disease.

The shrimp diet significantly lowered triglyceride levels, more than either the baseline low-fat diet or egg-based diet. Elevated triglycerides are often a worrisome factor in heart-related problems. The shrimp diet did not increase levels of heart-damaging LDL cholesterol.

Bottom line: With our health consciousness focused on total fat intake rather than on dietary cholesterol, there are few objections to eating shrimp. According to the Rockefeller study, shrimp can be included in hearth-healthy nutritional guidelines.² So eat smart when you eat shrimp.

¹ American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 11996:64:712:-7 Effects of shrimp consumption on plasma lipoproteins, Elizabeth R De Oliveira e Silva, Cynthia E. Seidman, Jason J. Tian, Lisa C. Hudgins, Frank M. Sacks and Jan L. Breslow.

² As with all foods, the recommendations are for consumers with dietary constraints to exercise the cautions prescribed by their doctors.



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When it comes to heart health, shellfish - including shrimp and lobster - are considered, on a par with skinless poultry when you look at the potential blood cholesterol-raising abilities of different foods. For instance, consider the "Cholesterol-Saturated Fat Index" (CSI) developed by Dr. S.L. Connor and his wife Sonja Connor, M.S., R.D. and colleagues. The CSI takes into account varying amounts of both saturated fat and cholesterol in a food; the lower the CSI, the less likely that food is to contribute to high blood cholesterol. Following is the CSI for various protein foods.

Cholesterol-Saturated Fat Index for Selected Foods

(3-1/2 ounce cooked, edible portions unless otherwise indicated)

Crustaceans (shrimp, crab, lobster)	6
Poultry, no skin	6
Beef, pork and lamb:	
10% fat (ground sirloin, flank steak)	9
20% fat (ground chuck, pot roast)	13
30% fat (ground beef, pork, and lamb steaks, ribs, pork and lamb chops, roasts)	18
Whole eggs (2)	29
Most hard cheeses (Cheddar, Swiss, American)	26

(Adapted from the new American Diet, by S.L. Connor and W.E. Connor, Simon and Schuster, 1986.)

Indeed, shrimp and lobster have the same CSI as skinless chicken or turkey.

The crustaceans come out better than lean red meat because they're so low in saturated fat.

The most healthful ways to prepare shellfish include steaming, boiling, grilling, broiling, poaching and baking. The ideal is to add little or no butter, margarine, oil or shortening in cooking. Instead, enjoy the natural taste of shellfish or enhance them with lemon or lime juice, herbs, spices or marinades.

Nutritional Comparison Shrimp vs Chicken

(cooked without added fat or sauces)

	Shrimp 3 oz	Chicken Breast 3oz (no skin)
Calories	80	100
Total Fat	1 g	1.5 g
Saturated Fat	0g	0.5 g
Cholesterol	165 mg	70 mg
<i>(note CSI below)</i>		
Protein	18 g	24 g
Omega-3	0.3 g	-
Cholesterol-Saturated Fat Index (CSI)	6*	6*

* 3.5 oz cooked, edible portions *(Adapted from the New American Diet, by S.L. Connor and W.E. Connor, Simon and Schuster, 1986.)*

Sources: FDA, USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Releases 11-1 and 14, 2001, and Nutri-Fact Fresh food Labeling Program 1995.



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