

Shop yourself healthy!

The Portfolio Diet- what is it?

The Portfolio Diet is a style of eating which combines a group of foods (a portfolio of foods) which have been shown in studies to help to lower bad cholesterol in our blood. Each one is healthy and has blood cholesterol lowering effects on its own, but when you put the foods together and eat them everyday, this effect is even greater.

What are the special foods in the diet?

The foods which you need to include in your diet everyday are:

- Almonds.
- Foods rich in what is known as 'soluble' fibre like oats, barley and certain fruits like apples and pears and certain vegetables like baked beans, peas, red kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas.
- Soya as soya milk, soya yoghurt, tofu (also known as bean curd) and soya meat alternatives.
- Plant stanol spreads, yoghurts, yoghurt style shot drinks and 'cream' cheese.

How do you know that it could work?

Scientists have tested this diet on lots of people. One such study followed 55 people over a year and those who followed the diet most closely reduced their bad blood cholesterol by 20 per cent.

Why these particular foods?

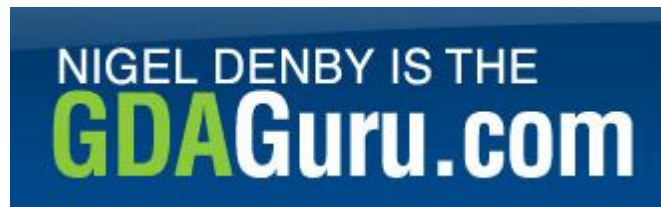
Almonds are great for vitamin E which is important for a healthy heart. They also seem to reduce certain proteins involved in making bad cholesterol as well as giving us fibre and being very low in saturated fat. They contribute plant sources of omega 3 oils as well which may also help their cholesterol lowering role.

Foods rich in soluble fibre are helpful because the fibre mixes with liquid in our stomachs and makes a kind of gel. This gel is able to trap some of the cholesterol in our digestive system and cart it out of our bodies in our stools which effectively then lowers the amount of bad cholesterol absorbed into our blood.

Soya beans, soya milk, soya yoghurt and soya bean curd called tofu all give us for soya protein which in studies also appears to help lower bad cholesterol.

Food enriched with plant stanols help to lower cholesterol in a similar way to soluble fibre in foods like porridge oats, apples and baked beans. The stanols grab hold of cholesterol in your digestive system and stop them being absorbed so that you get rid of them via your stools. You can find plant stanols and plant sterols which have the same effect naturally in foods like avocado, corn and olive oil, almonds, chick peas and soya beans.

In addition to these foods it is really good to eat oily fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines, pilchards, anchovies, eel and fresh tuna for example at least twice a week. These fish are rich in omega 3 oils which also seem to be good for our hearts, especially because they appear to help raise levels of 'good' cholesterol and may help to keep our arteries in good health, possibly helping to lower blood pressure and keeping blood flowing smoothly.



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How much of these foods do I need to eat each day?

- **Almonds:** 30g (that's a handful or around 23 whole almonds).
- **Soluble fibre:** You need to get 20g of soluble fibre a day. You can find this in for example in a combination of these foods throughout a typical day: a grapefruit and a big bowl of porridge with prunes for breakfast; an apple mid morning; a good portion of baked beans on toast for lunch; a pear mid afternoon and a sweet baked potato with a good serving of broccoli for dinner (along with maybe some grilled fish or lean grilled chicken).
- **2g of plant stanols:** In practice this means around two servings of Benecol or FloraProActive products each day. In practice a Benecol yoghurt style shot drink does actually contain 2g per drink but other products contain less. For example there is 1g in a 15g pat of Benecol spread; 1g from 25g of Benecol cream cheese spread and 1g from 150g of Benecol yoghurt (which is a pot and quarter).
- **50g of soya protein:** You can virtually get this by having a combination of the following throughout the day: a litre of light soya milk a day (25g of soya protein) and 115g of tofu (20g of soya protein). Soya beans and burgers made from soya are an easy way to boost intakes by another 12g per serving.

This seems like a lot of food...won't I put on weight?

It is very unlikely because these foods will replace things you are already eating; they are not in addition to the things you already eat. The Portfolio Diet usually gives you around 1800 -2000 calories per day. Many men will lose pounds eating this amount of food and many women as well.

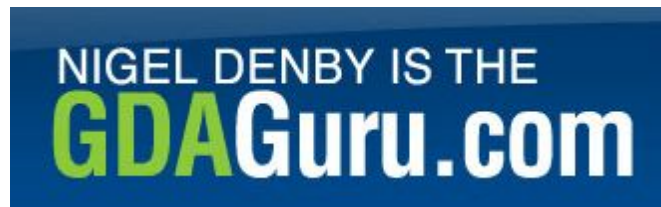
It is important when following the Portfolio Diet to give your diet a real spring clean and as well as adding the Portfolio of foods above to your menu each day, there are foods you especially need to avoid. These are the ones which give you saturated animal fats.

This is because when you eat saturated fats they encourage your liver to produce extra bad cholesterol. Limiting them means that you help your body to make less. Foods rich in saturated fats include:

- Fatty cuts of meat
- Pies and pasties
- Sausage rolls
- Cakes and biscuits
- Many ice creams
- Cheese
- Full fat dairy foods
- It is also wise to be careful about eggs

Which foods can you eat in addition to the specific Portfolio Diet ones?

You can enjoy extra lean cuts of meat like very lean steak and pork a couple of times a week and lots of fish and seafood both white like plaice and coley and cod (not in batter or breadcrumbs!) and oily like sardines, salmon mackerel and pilchards which can be fresh, frozen or canned. Fresh tuna steaks are also good.



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You can also pile your plates high with vegetables (not with added butter) and salad with light dressings (not mayonnaise and fatty dressings like Blue Cheese).

You can also tuck into lots of fruit.

What's a typical day's meals and snacks on the Portfolio Diet?

Breakfast: A grapefruit followed by a big bowl of porridge made with light soya milk or some sugar free muesli made with oats and some prunes served with light soya milk. NOTE: YOU SHOULD NOT EAT GRAPEFRUIT IF TAKING STATIN MEDICATION.

Mid am: A pear and a latte made with light soya milk or a fruit soya smoothie.

Lunch: A pitta bread stuffed with hummus and salad followed by a Benecol yoghurt.

Mid pm: An apple and a Benecol yoghurt drink.

Dinner: A big vegetable stir fry using tofu and chicken and almonds served with brown rice and a big bowl of raspberries for pudding with a soya yoghurt.

Are you allowed to drink alcohol?

The odd glass of red wine or ½ a lager at the weekend won't do any harm once you have got your cholesterol levels down using the Portfolio Plan.

What else can you drink?

Lots of water. Smoothies made with light soya milk and lattes and cappuccinos or home made milky coffee using light soya milk are good choices. Tea made with light soya milk and a small 250ml serving of pomegranate juice are also good. Try to have tea and coffee without sugar and avoid sugary squashes and fizzy drinks.