



Dr. Steve Sinatra: In today's **Wellness Wisdom**, I want to talk about cholesterol. Specifically, the most important cholesterol ratio you should be paying attention to for optimum heart health. You've heard me say it over and over again — here on this podcast, in my books, and in articles on the Healthy Directions site. Cholesterol isn't the real culprit when it comes to heart health — inflammation is. But there is one cholesterol ratio you want to watch; your ratio of triglycerides to HDL cholesterol levels.

In fact, a study published in the American Heart Association journal, *Circulation*, found that those people with the highest triglyceride to HDL ratios had a 16 times greater risk of heart disease than those with the lowest ratios. So what should your triglycerides to HDL cholesterol ratio be?

Ideally, you want no more than a 2:1 ratio of triglycerides to HDL cholesterol. So if your triglycerides are 100 MG/DL, your HDL cholesterol should be 50 MG/DL. Anything under a 3:1 is considered a good ratio, but I don't like to see blood lipid ratio that's over 5:1. You can learn even more about this ratio in my book, *The Great Cholesterol Myth*.

So if your ratio of triglycerides to HDL cholesterol is high, how can you lower it? A powerful solution I found for promoting a healthy triglyceride to HDL ratio is an extract from the citrus bergamot orange, grown in the Calabria area of Italy. Research has shown it helps to lower triglycerides and increase HDL cholesterol levels. It also helps to reduce blood glucose levels.

Some other tips for lowering your triglycerides naturally include reducing your intake of sugar and processed carbohydrates, and taking omega-3 essential fatty acids, which help promote normal triglyceride levels.

And, my advice on raising your HDL levels, take niacin [vitamin B3], get regular physical exercise — and you may even drink some red wine, in moderation. You heard that right! Red wine helps to boost HDL cholesterol. Plus, it contains resveratrol, a phytonutrient with cardioprotective benefits.

Just remember, your diet is really crucial here. Avoid processed foods, as well as those as high in sugar and trans fats. Instead, opt for foods that are rich in heart-healthy fats, like olive oil and avocados — and soluble fiber, like organic pears and almonds, to mention a few.

Narrator: Thank you for joining us for today's special **Be HEALTHistic**. Join us next week for more **Wellness Wisdom** from the Doctors Sinatra.