



AGATA & ROSS THEIR UCLP© STORY



Still in their 30s, couple Agata and Ross were both shocked to discover they had high cholesterol. While Ross, 33, had never given his cholesterol levels a second thought, Agata, 39, was surprised to learn her cholesterol was raised, especially as she was a healthy weight and didn't eat much meat or full cream dairy. After getting their cholesterol test results, they both realised they needed a lifestyle overhaul and so followed the Ultimate Cholesterol Lowering Plan© [ULCP©] for nine weeks.

Ross says: "I knew I'd gained a lot of weight in the past few years, mainly due to losing focus on exercise and falling into unhealthy eating habits – I enjoyed meat, chocolate, pastries and cheese, and didn't eat much fruit or veg. But at only 33, it was a massive shock to find out I had high cholesterol and that this was bad news for my heart."

Agata says: "Working from home meant I wasn't cycling to work so was less active than I'd been in the past. Plus, pastries, sugary snacks, butter and takeaways had started to become regular additions to my diet. But because I still ate a mainly plant-based diet and wasn't overweight, I never expected my cholesterol to be high."

STEP 1: MAKING A COMMITMENT

After the shock of discovering they both had high cholesterol in their 30s, Ross and Agata were keen to make changes to their lifestyle that would leave them fit and healthy. They both recognised they'd let unhealthy habits creep in over the past few years and realised making changes together would keep them motivated and on track. Both set goals to get more active and improve their fitness levels. With a Body Mass Index of almost 35, Ross also wanted to make changes to his diet that would help him lose weight as well as lower his cholesterol, while Agata was keen to follow an eating plan that would also benefit her overall health and keep her protein levels up.



UCLP© STEP 2: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Eating fewer foods high in saturated fat and replacing them with foods that contain unsaturated fat as part of a varied, balanced diet and lifestyle is one of the key things we can do to help manage our cholesterol,¹ so this was the priority for Ross and Agata. They started by swapping butter for vegetable oil or unsaturated fat spreads. Agata already ate a mostly plant-based diet, but Ross was eating meat every day, so he decided to cut it out entirely – something he found far easier than expected. He also ate less cheese. They both included a few portions of fish and some egg-based dishes each week, but the biggest change was including more plant and alternative proteins, which are naturally low in saturated fat. While Agata already included some in her diet, they experimented with ones they'd not tried before such as marinated and smoked tofu, tempeh and mycoprotein (Quorn) pieces, and tried a wider variety of beans and lentils.



Agata says: *“I now think about how to add more plant foods to increase variety in my meals, which also makes them taste nicer and it feels like I’m getting more nourishment from each meal.”*

Another key foundation for a balanced diet is to have at least five portions of fruit and veg a day. Agata already ate plenty, but Ross wasn’t having enough so he focussed on upping his intake, adding fruit to his breakfast and having vegetable soup or a salad for lunch.

Ross says: *“I’ve eaten more fruit and veg in the last two months than I have in the last two years! I’m really enjoying what I’m eating.”*

STEP 3: ADDING IN UCLP© FOODS



There’s plenty of evidence from studies that some foods are especially good at helping to manage cholesterol and the UCLP© includes four of these: soya and nuts which are low in saturated fat and provide heart healthy unsaturated fats,¹ oats and barley,² and foods with added stanols or sterols.³

Agata already enjoyed some soya alternatives to dairy, but she upped her intake and tried a greater variety such as Greek-style alternatives to yogurt. Ross joined her, too, swapping dairy milk on cereal

and in drinks for a fortified soya alternative to milk. He also started his day with an oat-based cereal or porridge. It’s such a simple and effective breakfast as oats provide a specific type of fibre called beta-glucan that, when consumed as part of a balanced and varied diet and lifestyle, has been proven to lower cholesterol levels.²

GETTING ACTIVE

Both Ross and Agata were keen to get fitter and committed to this at the start of their lifestyle makeover. Agata did yoga every day, focussed on increasing her steps and included a cycle or longer walk at the weekend. Ross was already cycling to work and going to the gym a few times a week, but he incorporated a bigger exercise session at the weekend concentrating on weights.



Ross says: “Because I was doing more weight training, it was important for me to include enough protein in my diet to help build and maintain muscle.^{4,5} I discovered plant and alternative proteins such as soya alternatives to milk and yogurt, beans, nuts and Quorn mycoprotein were an easy and versatile way to achieve this whilst keeping saturated fat intakes down.”

LITTLE CHANGE, THE BIG RESULTS

ROSS

In just **nine weeks**, Ross’s **total cholesterol** dropped by around 20%, going from a **high of 6.8mmol/L to a much lower 5.4mmol/L** – far closer to the target level of below 5mmol/L. Equally impressive was a 30% fall in his **LDL (bad) cholesterol from 4.6mmol/L to 3.2mmol/L**, again, almost reaching the target level of below 3mmol/L. He also lost 2.7kg and 4cm from his waist. And his [NHS Heart Age](#) is now 1 year younger than his actual age of 33 years.

Ross says: “I’m really surprised by my cholesterol results over this short time on a plan that was really no extra effort to follow. I plan to keep on the UCLP© for my own health and for the environment.”

AGATA

Agata’s managed to get her cholesterol levels from high to within normal levels. She saw a 25% drop in her **total cholesterol from a high of 6.5mmol/L to 4.5mmol/L** and a massive 34% fall in **LDL from a high of 4.1mmol/L to a healthy 2.7mmol/L**.

Agata says: “I’m so happy my cholesterol results are now normal. I never expected my cholesterol would be high as I considered my diet and lifestyle to be healthy. I’m glad though, that I got my cholesterol checked in my 30s and have been able to adjust my eating pattern to manage it. I’d recommend any of my friends and family get theirs checked, too, even if they think they eat quite well and exercise regularly.”

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[HEARTUK.ORG.UK/UCLP-PROTEIN](https://heartuk.org.uk/uclp-protein)



HEALTH CLAIMS MADE IN THIS DOCUMENT

- 1) Reducing consumption of saturated fat, as part of a balanced and varied diet and lifestyle, contributes to the maintenance of normal blood cholesterol levels.
- 2) Oats and barley are a source of a specific type of fibre, known as beta-glucan. Consuming 3g beta-glucans daily as part of a balanced, varied diet and lifestyle, has been proven to lower cholesterol levels. High cholesterol is a risk factor in the development of coronary heart disease. A bowl of porridge made with 30g oats will provide approximately 1g beta-glucan.
- 3) Consuming 1.5-3g of plant sterols or plant stanol esters daily, as part of a varied balanced diet and lifestyle, have been shown to reduce blood cholesterol. High cholesterol is a risk factor in the development of coronary heart disease.
- 4) Protein, as part of a varied and balanced diet and lifestyle, contributes to the maintenance of muscle mass.
- 5) Protein, as part of a varied and balanced diet and lifestyle, contributes to a growth in muscle mass.



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