LiVe Well

Nutrition for a Healthy Heart
HEART-HEALTHY EATING — WHO NEEDS IT?
YOU DO.

The building blocks of good nutrition are the same for everyone. You might have specific nutritional goals if you’re overweight, or if you have diabetes, heart failure, high blood pressure, or other health problems. But the basics don’t change.

To protect your heart and blood vessels — and enjoy a longer and healthier life — experts agree that we ALL need to build a better diet based on the ideas in this booklet.
Eating right is one of the best things you can do for your heart. This booklet provides guidelines for heart-healthy eating and offers tips for making dietary adjustments easier and more enjoyable.

Heart-healthy eating should be creative and enjoyable. This booklet will help you enjoy a heart-healthy diet. Heart-healthy eating aims to improve the quantity AND the quality of your life!

As you read, keep in mind that your healthcare providers will tailor dietary recommendations to your specific health needs. So if your healthcare providers’ instructions are different from the guidelines provided here, always follow your providers’ instructions.

Rx FOR AN RD

Your healthcare providers may refer you to a Registered Dietitian (RD or RDN) to help you make changes to your diet. An RD can teach you about nutrition, help you choose foods and plan menus, monitor your progress, and encourage you to stick with your eating plan.

“When I went to see my doctor, he said my cholesterol was pretty high. That surprised me, because I’m not overweight and I’m in decent shape. But my doctor explained the risks, so I took it seriously.

Diet was the toughest change for me, but my wife helps. She’s always trying out new recipes, and serving lots of vegetables and fruit. And I’ve gotten really good at reading food labels. You have to watch out. The figures they quote are just for one serving, not for the whole package. So when you start to calculate, you see you’re getting way too much fat and salt. Anyway, the best motivation is seeing that healthier eating can really make a difference. With medicine and a good diet, my cholesterol is down quite a bit.”

— GORDON, diagnosed with high cholesterol
Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is important for everyone, at every stage of life. But for someone with heart disease risk factors, it’s vital. When you look at the cardiac risk factors below, you can see that healthy eating is not only a necessity and a pleasure, it’s an important way to prevent heart disease.

What are cardiac risk factors?
Cardiac risk factors are conditions or behaviors that increase your chance of developing coronary disease or heart disease. The major cardiac risk factors can be divided into two groups:

- **Factors you cannot change**, including age, sex, family history of heart disease, and a personal history of heart problems.
- **Factors you can change**, including high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, high blood glucose (sugar), inflammation, prediabetes or diabetes, smoking, physical inactivity, overweight and obesity, sleep problems, and stress. And what you eat!

How can healthy eating help?
Healthy eating can help you control major cardiac risk factors — or even eliminate them — by:

- Lowering your cholesterol
- Losing excess weight
- Controlling blood sugar and diabetes
- Lowering your blood pressure
- Decreasing inflammation

A healthy diet can help heart, blood pressure, or cholesterol medications work better and with fewer side effects.

And healthy eating simply makes you feel better. You’ll have more energy, more restful sleep, and improved digestion. Feeling better makes any treatment or prevention plan more effective.

ABOUT CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a substance found in all body cells. Our body needs it to function normally. But our body can make what it needs. Our liver makes it from certain foods we eat. Abnormal levels of certain types of cholesterol, though, can cause coronary artery disease. Your healthcare provider will test your blood for:

- High levels of LDL cholesterol (“bad” cholesterol).
- Low levels of HDL cholesterol (“good” cholesterol).
- High levels of triglycerides.
- High levels of hs-CRP (C-Reactive Protein) — a measure of inflammation. Along with other risk factors, high levels of hs-CRP indicate increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

ABOUT DIABETES AND PRE-DIABETES

Diabetes is a disease that causes your blood glucose (sugar) levels to be too high. It can damage your blood vessels and increase your risk for heart attack, stroke, and other health problems.

If you have blood sugar levels that are moderately high, you may have a condition called pre-diabetes. If you have pre-diabetes, now is the perfect time to get your blood glucose under control through changes in your diet.
**Building Blocks**

What does a healthy diet look like? How can you get a proper balance of nutrients, control your weight, and avoid harmful ingredients? With all of the diet plans and nutrition research flooding the news, it may seem like there are no clear answers to these questions.

The truth is, there is a lot of agreement about how you should eat to protect your heart. Research from the past several decades clearly shows that you can build a heart-healthy diet with six basic building blocks — arranged in the right proportions.

1. **Eat fruits and vegetables.**
   In fact, in a typical meal, half your plate should be fruits and vegetables. *(See page 7.)*

2. **Choose whole and unprocessed grains**
   Grains and starches together should fill about ¼ of your plate for most meals. *(See page 9.)*

3. **Choose heart-healthy proteins.**
   A healthy portion will take up about ¼ of your plate. *(See page 11.)*

4. **Choose unsaturated fats and oils.**
   *(See page 14.)*

5. **Choose low-fat dairy products or dairy alternatives.**
   *(See page 17.)*

6. **Limit your sodium (salt), sugar, and alcohol.**
   *(See page 19.)*
Eat lots of fruits and vegetables

It’s probably no surprise to hear that fruits and vegetables are good for your overall health — for one thing, people who eat a variety of fruits and vegetables usually eat more fiber. But did you know that they’re especially good for your heart? Here’s why:

• Fruits and vegetables can be a great source of soluble fiber. Soluble fiber has been proven to reduce blood cholesterol levels.

• Fruits and vegetables provide antioxidants such as vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, and lycopene. Antioxidants protect your cells from damage — they’re like “rust-proofing” for your body. Taking antioxidant supplements has not been shown to prevent heart disease. But studies have shown that foods with antioxidants (see the list at right) do help protect your heart from disease.

• Fruits and vegetables are an important source of minerals such as calcium, potassium, and magnesium. A mineral-rich diet can help lower blood pressure and keep electrolytes in proper balance.

• Many fruits and vegetables contain flavonoids, a kind of plant nutrient (phytonutrient) that may improve heart health. The best sources of flavonoids are brightly colored fruits and vegetables, such as berries, apples, tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, and onions.

TOP ANTIOXIDANT FOODS

These foods have the most antioxidants per serving:

• Dark green leafy vegetables
• Kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, and red beans
• Blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, raspberries, strawberries, cherries, and papaya
• Artichokes
• Prunes and plums
• Walnuts
• Apples

Spices such as cinnamon, cloves, tumeric, and oregano are also rich in antioxidants.

RED FOODS TO THE RESCUE

Research has shown that one particular antioxidant — lycopene — may play a powerful part in reducing the risk of a heart attack. Studies show that men who had the highest amount of lycopene in their body fat were half as likely to suffer a heart attack than those with the least amount. Lycopene gives certain foods a red color. To help your heart, eat more of these red, lycopene-rich foods:

• Tomatoes and tomato products
• Watermelon
• Strawberries
• Pink grapefruit*

*Grapefruit and grapefruit juice interact with some drugs. Do not eat them unless your physician or pharmacist has approved it.
Building Block 1: Eat lots of fruits and vegetables

**TARGETS**

To make sure you’re eating enough fruits and vegetables, aim for the following:

- Eat 3 to 4 servings (about 1½ to 2 cups total) of fruit each day
- Eat 3 to 5 servings (about 1½ to 2½ cups total) of vegetables each day

**TIPS**

Here are a few tips for getting enough fruits and vegetables in your daily diet — and for getting the most benefit from them.

**TO HELP YOU EAT ENOUGH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:**

- Top a bowl of whole grain cereal with sliced bananas or berries each morning.
- Make a healthy fruit smoothie with frozen bananas and berries and a splash of 100% juice.
- Keep your freezer well stocked with frozen vegetable combinations. Cook them with a healthy protein source for a quick stir-fry lunch or dinner.
- Keep a fruit basket instead of a candy dish at your desk.
- Choose restaurants that offer a healthy salad bar.
- Keep prewashed lettuce greens and sliced vegetables in the refrigerator to make quick salads.
- Use dried fruit as a quick snack or as a topping for cereal, salad, or yogurt.

**TO GET THE MOST OUT OF EACH SERVING:**

- Choose whole fruits more often than fruit juices. Whole fruits are higher in fiber.
- For more fiber, leave the peel or skin on fruits and vegetables where appropriate.
- Select fruits and fruit juices without added sweeteners or syrups.
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables without added sauces, fats, or salts.
- Steer clear of deep-fried vegetables or vegetables smothered in butter or cream sauce.
- Eat more dark green and deep yellow or orange vegetables. These vegetables tend to be the most nutrient-rich.*

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**SAMPLE SERVINGS (PORTIONS)**

**Fruits**

- 1 small piece of fruit (orange, apple, kiwi, plum, peach, pear, or nectarine)
- ½ medium banana
- 1 cup melon
- ¾ cup to 1 cup berries
- ½ cup unsweetened juice
- 2 tablespoons dried fruit

**Vegetables**

- 1 cup raw vegetables
- 1 cup leafy green vegetables
- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- ½ cup vegetable juice (low sodium)

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*Dark green, leafy vegetables are high in vitamin K, which may interfere with blood-thinning medication such as Coumadin. If you take a blood-thinning medication, keep your intake of vitamin K-rich foods consistent — be careful not to significantly increase or decrease how much or how often you eat them. Ask your healthcare providers for more information.

Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice while taking blood pressure or cholesterol lowering medications.
Eat more whole grains
Foods like bread, rice, and pasta are a staple of diets all over the world. These grains — and starchy vegetables like potatoes — may be big hits at your house, too. But as with other foods, some grains and starches are better for your heart than others. To improve your heart health, choose unrefined, fiber-rich whole grain products and other unprocessed starches instead of refined starches.

Whole grains and other unprocessed starches: the healthiest choice
Whole grain foods include all parts of the grain kernel (the bran, the germ, the exosperm, and the endosperm). Whole grains and other unprocessed starches are far better for your heart than refined foods, because they provide more of the following:

- **Dietary fiber.** Studies have linked high-fiber diets to reduced risk of heart disease.
- **Complex carbohydrates.** Compared to the carbohydrates provided by white bread, white rice, and other processed foods, whole grains give you longer-lasting energy, more fiber, and more nutrients.
- **Vitamins and minerals.** Whole grains are rich in heart-healthy nutrients like the B vitamins, vitamin E, and minerals like magnesium, copper, selenium, and zinc.

Whole wheat cereals, pastas, couscous, and quinoa, as well as oats and brown or wild rice are a few examples of whole grains. “Unprocessed starches” also include beans and vegetables like whole white and sweet potatoes, peas, winter squash, and corn — simply prepared with little or no fat. If eaten with the skin on, these starchy vegetables provide even more fiber and other nutrients.

Refined starches: a less-nutritious choice
Refined (or processed) grains are milled differently than whole grains. The milling process removes the bran and often the germ from the grain, stripping away fiber and many other important nutrients. And although some nutrients are added back in when refined grain is fortified, not all of them are replaced. That's why refined foods like white bread, white pasta, white rolls or buns, or white rice are less-nutritious choices. They are lower in fiber and nutrition, and give you only short-lived energy.

FIBER FACTS
There are two main types of dietary fiber: **soluble** and **insoluble.** Both types are important in your diet — but soluble fiber has special benefits for your heart health. Research shows that it can lower LDL cholesterol levels.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends eating at least 5 to 10 grams soluble fiber a day. Eating up to 15 to 25 grams can significantly reduce cholesterol.

The following foods are good sources of soluble fiber:

- Oatmeal and oat bran
- Barley and brown rice
- Psyllium husk or seeds, found in some bran cereals and in fiber supplements
- Legumes, such as peas and dried beans, especially lentils and lima, kidney, pinto beans, and edamame
- Nuts
- Pectin, found in fruits such as apples, oranges, pears, prunes, apricots, blackberries, passion fruit, figs, and mangoes
- Vegetables, especially broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and carrots, artichokes, winter squash, turnips, asparagus, and avocado
- Ground flax and chia seeds
**TIPS**

Most people have no problem eating enough starches. The trick is to eat more whole grains and other unprocessed starches. Follow the tips below.

- **Read food labels.** Although whole grain foods are usually darker and crunchier than refined foods, you can’t always identify them by color and texture. Beware of front labels making claims like “multigrain,” or “made with 100% wheat.” These claims can be misleading. Instead, check the ingredient list for the word “whole” — for example, “whole grain” or “whole oats.” See page 21 for more information on reading food labels.

- **Find cookbooks or recipes** that emphasize whole grains.

- **Use a pressure cooker** to cook whole grains more quickly. Whole grains may take longer to cook than processed grains.

- **Watch out for “tag-along trouble.”** Many whole grain snacks and cereals are high in sugar and fat. Read food labels carefully. Steer clear of grain products made with hydrogenated fats, which contain harmful trans fats.

- **Branch out with your beans.** Try lentils, navy beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), white beans, and black beans.

- **Try whole grain products** you haven’t tried before:
  - Amaranth topped with your favorite tomato-based sauce
  - Barley in soups, stews, or as a side dish
  - Bulgur as a hot cereal or in tabouli salad
  - Whole cornmeal or polenta served as a hot cereal
  - Whole wheat couscous flavored with raisins, almonds, cinnamon, and ginger for dessert
  - Cracked wheat in whole grain cereals or whole wheat berries
  - Kashi used as a pilaf or hot cereal
  - Millet cooked as a hot cereal or pilaf
  - Quinoa served as a pilaf or in chili (be sure to rinse quinoa before cooking)

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**SAMPLE SERVINGS (PORTIONS)**

- 1 slice (1 ounce) of 100% whole grain bread
- ½ cup cooked brown rice, bulgur, barley, millet, or quinoa
- ½ cup whole grain cereal or cooked oatmeal
- ½ cup cooked whole wheat pasta or whole wheat couscous
- 5 to 7 whole grain crackers
- 3 cups air-popped popcorn
- ½ cup corn

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**Aim for 5 to 8 servings (about 5 to 8 ounces total) of grain and other starches every day. Try to make at least half of the servings whole grains.**

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**BUILDING BLOCK 2: EAT MORE WHOLE GRAINS**

NUTRITION FOR A HEALTHY HEART Live Well
Choose heart-healthy proteins

Protein is an important element of a healthy diet. Dietary protein helps repair body tissues and build muscles — including your heart muscle. Unfortunately, many sources of protein are also high in saturated fat and cholesterol. How can you meet your protein needs AND lower cardiac risk factors at the same time? The trick is getting your protein from the right sources.

The information here will help you choose proteins — from both animal and plant sources — that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Many of these sources of protein also provide additional nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids and fiber.

Heart-healthy animal proteins

- **Fish and shellfish:** Fish and shellfish are good sources of protein and are lower in saturated fat than other animal proteins. In addition, several varieties of fish — such as halibut, salmon, trout, and sardines — are also rich in omega-3 fatty acids.

- **Poultry:** Skinless, white meat of poultry (such as chicken and turkey) are all good sources of lean protein. Watch out for poultry such as duck and goose, which are higher in fat.

- **Eggs:** Eggs are a good choice for most people. In the past, it was thought that few eggs could be allowed in a heart healthy diet because egg yolks contain cholesterol. We now know that it’s the trans fats and saturated fats that increase blood cholesterol levels. Eggs are low in these fats. In addition, eggs produced today have less cholesterol than they used to, about 185 mg each.

Eggs — especially the yolks — provide high-quality protein and essential vitamins and minerals. Cutting eggs from your diet is not recommended. One way to not eat more than one egg per day is to limit eggs in recipes. Try substituting one egg with 2 egg whites, ¼ cup egg substitute, or — in baking only — ¼ cup applesauce.

**HOW MUCH DIETARY CHOLESTEROL?**

Your body needs cholesterol, but too much of it can increase your risk for coronary artery disease.

Dietary cholesterol is found only in foods that come from animals, including meats, fish (especially shellfish), high-fat dairy products (such as whole and 2% milk, cheese, and butter), egg yolks, and organ meat.

**HOW MUCH FISH?**

People who eat fish often have lower rates of heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends eating 3½ ounces cooked or ¾ cup flaked oily fish at least 2 times a week. Good fish to consider include:

- Lake trout
- Salmon
- Sardines
- Albacore tuna
- Herring
- Oysters
- Halibut

Taking fish oil pills rich in omega-3 fatty acids does not appear to affect risk of heart attack or stroke. Eating fish is a better choice. Take fish oil pills only when recommended by your dietitian or healthcare provider.

**Note:** Mercury is increasingly common in many seafish. To reduce harmful effects of environmental pollution, avoid eating shark, king mackerel, or tilefish. Eat a variety of fish (fresh, frozen, or canned).
What about other animal proteins, like beef and pork?

Because these meats tend to be high in saturated fat and cholesterol, they don’t merit the term “heart-healthy.” But that doesn’t mean you can’t eat them. Select only lean meat cuts (see sidebar). Trim off the fat before cooking. Always use low-fat cooking methods such as grilling, broiling, baking, roasting, or stewing. When broiling, roasting, or baking, use a rack to drain the fat.

Heart-healthy plant proteins

- **Beans**: Beans are a great source of protein and have the added benefit of being high in soluble fiber and other nutrients. There are many types of beans that can be used in a variety of ways. Examples include black beans, pinto beans, navy beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, black-eyed peas, and lentils.

- **Soy and soy products**: Heart-healthy soy protein is found in whole soybeans (edamame), tofu, tempeh, soymilk, soy yogurt, textured soy protein, soy flour, soy nuts, and soy protein powder. Several “meat substitutes” such as meatless burgers and hotdogs also contain soy protein. Many soy products are high in sodium, so check for sodium content.

- **Nuts and nut products**: Nuts are a great source of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and heart-healthy fats. Evidence suggests eating at least ½ to 1 cup nuts per day reduces total and LDL cholesterol, which is important in decreasing the risk of heart disease. Some good nuts to try are raw almonds, pistachios, pecans, peanuts, pine nuts, and walnuts.

- **Seeds**: Seeds, like nuts, give you protein along with many other heart-healthy nutrients. A few good examples include pumpkin, sunflower, chia, ground flax, and sesame seeds. Use seeds on top of salads and cereals, or mixed into a healthy trail mix.
Building Block 3:  
Choose heart-healthy proteins

**Targets**

Eat 2 to 3 servings (about 4 to 6 ounces total) of heart-healthy protein daily. Get your protein from a variety of sources.

**Sample Servings (portions)**

- 3 ounces fish, white-meat poultry (skin removed), or extra-lean red meat
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter or other nut butter such as almond or soy butter
- ½ cup steamed soybeans (edamame) with pods removed
- ½ cup tofu or tempeh
- 1 egg or 2 egg whites
- ½ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils
- 4 to 10 raw nuts or peanuts
- ⅛ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon seeds

**Tips**

Here are some tips for a protein-rich, heart-healthy diet:

- Avoid processed meats. Foods such as hot dogs, salami, and other lunch meats are usually high in fat and sodium.
- Watch your portion sizes. Stick to portions that are about the size of a deck of cards — or the palm of your hand. If it’s bigger than that, it’s bigger than one portion.
- Experiment with meatless recipes. Try substituting beans, low-fat cheese, or tofu in your favorite recipes.
- Check out a vegetarian cookbook for new ideas for tasty, filling, and easy-to-prepare entrees.

**A Good Day for Heart-Healthy Proteins**

The notes below show how you can eat healthy proteins — from a variety of sources — all day long:

**For breakfast:**

- Try scrambled tofu or an egg with fresh, chopped vegetables and herbs.
- Serve a high-protein fruit smoothie by blending silken tofu or plain Greek yogurt with frozen berries and bananas and raw nuts.
- Spread 1 tablespoon of natural peanut butter on toasted whole grain bread. Top with sliced bananas and a sprinkle of sunflower seeds.
- Add 1 serving toasted nuts and/or seeds to any whole-grain cold or hot breakfast cereal.
- Steer clear of high-fat breakfast meats such as bacon or sausage. Many grocery stores and specialty stores carry healthy vegetarian alternatives.

**For lunch and dinner:**

- A cottage-cheese-and-fruit plate makes a quick and easy light meal.
- Use flavored, baked tofu in stir-fry dishes.
- Turn an ordinary salad into a high-protein meal by topping it with kidney beans, garbanzo beans, or black beans. Add a sprinkle of sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, or slivered almonds for added protein and crunch.
- Use lean cuts of thinly sliced turkey for sandwiches on whole grain bread.
- Experiment with different kinds of bean soups or chili, such as navy bean or black bean.

**For snacks:**

- For a healthy high-protein snack, choose nuts or seeds instead of pretzels or chips.
- Serve hummus (made from garbanzo beans) with pita strips for a great appetizer.
- Low-fat refried beans mixed with a touch of fresh salsa make a great bean dip. Serve with baked tortilla chips as a quick and healthy snack.
- Steamed soybeans, also known as edamame, make a terrific high-protein snack. (Remember to remove the pod.)
Choose unsaturated fats and oils

Dietary fat has essential nutrients that keep your body running smoothly. Fat also adds flavor and texture to meals and helps you feel satisfied after eating. Some fats have even been shown to be heart-healthy, while others may increase cardiac risk factors. How do you make good decisions about fat in your diet? The key is learning about and choosing the right types of fats.

Unsaturated fats: the healthiest choice

Unsaturated fat is a type of fat that is liquid at room temperature and comes mostly from plant sources. Eating foods high in unsaturated fat — especially in place of foods with a lot of saturated fat — may help lower LDL cholesterol levels. This helps lower your risk of heart disease. There are two main types of unsaturated fat: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated.

- **Monounsaturated fats** occur mostly in plant oils. Rich sources include:
  - Olive, canola, and peanut oils
  - Olives and avocados
  - Unsalted peanuts, natural peanut butter, almond butter and almonds, hazelnuts, mixed nuts, and pistachios

- **Polyunsaturated fats** are found in plant foods and some fish. Good sources include:
  - Vegetable oils such as safflower, sunflower, corn, cottonseed, flaxseed, and soybean oils
  - Fatty fish, such as salmon, trout, tuna, sardines, and herring
  - Sunflower, sesame, and pumpkin seeds, ground flax
  - Walnuts, pine nuts, tahini

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS ARE ESPECIALLY HEART HEALTHY

One type of polyunsaturated fat that’s particularly good for your heart is omega-3 fatty acid. This type of fat can help lower triglycerides and help reduce inflammation. The best sources are found in the following fish:

- Salmon (fresh or canned), herring, lake trout, mackerel, and sardines

Lesser amounts are found in these plant-based foods:

- Soybeans and tofu
- Walnuts, ground flaxseeds, and chia seeds
- Foods fortified with omega-3 fatty acids, such as eggs, margarine, yogurt, milk, and soymilk

WHAT THE AHA SAYS ABOUT FATS...

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that ALL Americans — not just those with heart conditions — limit their intake of saturated fat. A practical step in this direction is to eat unsaturated fats instead of saturated fats.

WHAT ABOUT FISH OIL SUPPLEMENTS?

If you eat enough foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, you may not need to take a fish oil supplement. Be sure your supplement contains the amounts your healthcare providers recommend. To figure the total amount of omega-3 fatty acids in the supplement, add the grams of EPA and DHA together.
**Saturated fat: a less-healthy choice**

*Saturated fat* is a type of fat that is usually solid at room or refrigerator temperature. It’s found mainly in foods that come from animals, although some plant oils also contain saturated fat. Eating foods high in saturated fat and total fat has more influence in raising your blood cholesterol than anything else you eat. Try to minimize your intake of saturated fats. Examples of foods high in saturated fat are:

- **Animal sources:**
  - Fatty meats such as prime grade, rib cuts, restaurant hamburgers, bacon, sausage, pepperoni, hot dogs, luncheon meats, and dark meat and skin of poultry
  - High-fat dairy products such as whole and 2% milk, butter, cream, sour cream, creamed soups, cheese, cream and cheese sauces, whipped cream, and ice cream
  - Lard, salt pork, meat gravies from pan drippings, and other meat fats

- **Plant sources:**
  - Cocoa butter, coconut, and coconut milk
  - Tropical oils such as coconut, palm, palm kernel oil

**Trans fats: unhealthy for your heart**

*Trans fats* raise levels of LDL and total cholesterol. They are particularly harmful because they also raise triglycerides and lower good HDL cholesterol. Aim for zero trans fats in your diet.

Some trans fats are found naturally in high-fat dairy products and fatty meats, but it’s also important to avoid industrial trans fats found in packaged foods. Food labels are required to list the amount of trans fats found in packaged foods. Food labels are required to list the amount of trans fats in the “Total Fat” section of the nutrition label. **Avoid foods that contain hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils.** Many products are now trans-fat free, but read labels of the following products carefully:

- Many margarines (especially stick margarines)
- Vegetable shortening
- Packaged snack foods such as chips, crackers, cookies, and many candies
- Bakery items such as cakes, cookies, croissants, donuts, pastries, biscuits, brownies, and pies
- Microwave and theater popcorn
- All deep-fried foods, such as French fries, fish sticks, chicken nuggets, onion rings, and others

**BUTTER VS. MARGARINE**

Confused about what to use? The best choice is a healthy unsaturated oil, such as olive oil, instead of butter OR margarine. Otherwise, use these tips for choosing heart-healthy margarine:

- Choose a soft-tub margarine with liquid vegetable oil as the first ingredient — but use oil in cooking whenever possible.
- Better yet, choose a margarine that lists zero trans fats in the Nutrition Facts label and has no partially hydrogenated fat in the ingredients.
- Read labels to choose one of the specialty margarines containing plant substances called plant stanols and/or sterols. Studies show that food supplemented with at least 2 to 3 grams of these substances can help reduce LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by 5% to 15% in 2 to 4 weeks. Plant stanols and sterols are also available as pills, chews, and powders.
- Look for other products with added stanols or sterols as well. They include some brands of yogurt, orange juice, mayonnaise, fat-free milk, cold cereals, cheese, breads, granola bars — even chocolate and caramel chews.
Building Block 4: 
Choose unsaturated fats and oils

**TARGETS**

Keep your total fat intake to 26% to 27% of your total daily calories.

The healthiest way to stay within this range is to stick to the following guidelines:

- Monounsaturated fats should account for 10% of your total daily calories.
- Polyunsaturated fats should account for 10% of your total daily calories.
- Saturated fats should account for less than 6% of your total daily calories.
- Trans fats should account for as few of your total daily calories as possible.

**HOW MUCH FAT?**

Keep fat to 26% to 27% of daily calories (57 to 60 grams of fat for a 2,000 calorie diet).

**TIPS**

To meet these targets for fat in your daily diet, try the following:

- Read food labels for saturated fat, cholesterol, and trans fat content.
- Watch out for hidden fats added during cooking or processing.
- Choose heart-healthy snacks instead of snacks with a lot of saturated fat. Here are some examples:
  - Air-popped — not microwave — popcorn with a light oil or butter spray
  - A handful of raw nuts
  - Celery topped with natural peanut butter
  - Baked corn chips served with a guacamole dip
  - Whole grain crackers served with an olive- or bean-based spread
- Substitute olive oil for butter or margarine whenever possible. Here are some delicious examples:
  - Combine olive oil with balsamic vinegar to use as a dipping sauce for bread — or better yet, fresh veggies
  - Lightly dress sliced potatoes with olive oil and fresh herbs, then bake to make healthy fries
  - Toss whole wheat pasta with olive oil and herbs along with a small amount of fresh Parmesan cheese (instead of high-fat cream or Alfredo sauce)
- Make your salad or sandwich heart-healthy by doing the following:
  - Experiment with homemade salad dressings by combining olive oil or another heart-healthy oil with different seasoned vinegars
  - Sprinkle your salad with sunflower or sesame seeds instead of bacon bits or croutons
  - Try different kinds of olives to add flavor to a salad
  - Use ¼ of a sliced avocado instead of mayonnaise or salad dressing on any sandwich

**SO...WHAT DO ALL THESE NUMBERS MEAN?**

The numbers are important, but all you really need to remember are the six heart-healthy building blocks. If you eat according to the building blocks, you should be able to hit these targets without crunching numbers.
Choose low-fat dairy products or dairy alternatives

Dairy products are a good source of calcium, protein, vitamin A, and vitamin D. However, they can be high in fat and cholesterol — a problem for anyone looking to reduce their cardiac risk factors.

Yet no one needs to give up dairy products. Sticking to low-fat dairy products or dairy alternatives will give you the same nutritional benefits without the drawbacks. Turn the page for targets and tips that will help you make the switch to low-fat dairy.

LACTOSE INTOLERANT?

The lactose, or milk sugar, in dairy products can be difficult for some people to digest.

If you have trouble with lactose, try the following tips to make sure you get the nutrients you need:

• Look for dairy products (such as Lactaid or Dairy Ease) that have been pretreated with lactose enzymes.
• Use a lactase supplement (such as Lactaid or Dairy Relief) before drinking milk or eating ice cream.
• Use calcium-enriched soymilk, rice milk, and almond milk. These dairy alternatives are lactose-free.
• Yogurt, cottage cheese, and cheese are lower in lactose than milk. Try them to see if you can tolerate these foods.

THE CALCIUM CONNECTION

Dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese are excellent sources of calcium. Yet other foods can provide calcium, too. Try dark green leafy vegetables, tofu, beans, almonds, and calcium-fortified juices and cereals. These foods boost your calcium intake — and provide other helpful nutrients at the same time.
### Building Block 5:

**Select low-fat dairy products and dairy alternatives**

#### Targets

Stick with products that are 1% fat or less, and aim for 3 servings (3 cups total) every day.

#### Sample Servings (Portions)

- 1 cup low-fat, skim, or fat-free milk
- 1 cup fortified soymilk
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt or calcium-fortified soy yogurt
- 1 ounce low-fat cheese
- ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese

#### Tips

Tips for meeting this target include the following:

- Use low-fat milk or soymilk on whole grain cereals.
- Choose enriched soymilks and other milk substitutes. For example, many soymilk brands are enriched with calcium, vitamin A, and vitamin D. Drink it plain, on cereal, or as a milk substitute in any recipe.
- Give yourself time to adjust to the taste of low-fat milk or soymilk. With time, most people come to enjoy these heart-healthy alternatives just as much as the “originals.”
- Watch out for coffee creamers and whipped toppings. These often contain a lot of saturated fat. Check the labels, and keep an eye out for low-fat or fat-free creamers and toppings.
- Try low-fat powdered milk. It’s easy to prepare and store and adds richness to coffee or tea. Also, adding low-fat powdered milk to a glass of skim milk makes it taste richer.
Limit sodium (salt), sugar, and alcohol

A heart-healthy diet means making good choices — and in some cases, setting a few limits. Here’s why you may need to limit salt, sugar, and alcohol.

• **Sodium (salt):** Cutting back on salt is important for everyone, but especially for people with high blood pressure, heart failure, or people who tend to retain fluids. Less sodium means less fluid in your body — and a lighter workload for your heart.

• **Added sugar:** Most sweets have a lot of flavor and a lot of calories, but little nutritional value. That’s why they’re often called “empty calories.” Keep sugar-sweetened beverages, candy, desserts, sports and energy drinks, and fruit drinks to a minimum.

• **Alcohol:** A little alcohol won’t hurt — and it may even help — your heart. But your alcohol intake should be moderate. For women, “moderate” means 1 drink a day. For men, the limit is 1 or 2 drinks a day. One “drink” means 12 ounces beer or wine cooler, 5 ounces wine, or 1½ ounces hard liquor. Stick with these targets to avoid the extra risk that alcohol use can bring.

**SODIUM, POTASSIUM, AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**

High blood pressure affects 1 in 4 Americans. It makes your heart work harder, damages arteries, and increases your risk for heart disease. Limiting sodium can help reduce this risk. But you may also be able to improve your blood pressure by adding more potassium and calcium to your diet.

Potassium-rich foods include dark green leafy vegetables, fruits from vines, and root vegetables. Here are a few examples:

- Potatoes, white or sweet
- Winter squash
- Prunes
- Cantaloupe and honeydew
- Oranges, apricots, bananas
- Soybeans (cooked)

**What about salt substitutes?** Talk to your healthcare provider before you use salt substitutes. They often contain large amounts of potassium, and they may be useful to some people but harmful to others with certain medical conditions.

**TEA? CHOCOLATE? WINE?**

*Indulge (a little)*

Fruits and vegetables are great sources of healthy flavonoids. But so are chocolate, tea, and wine. Here’s how to handle those hankerings in a healthy way:

• **Choose chocolate that’s low in sugar and fat.** Avoid milk chocolate. Instead, go for dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa content. A ½-ounce to 1-ounce serving of rich dark chocolate (about half a regular-size chocolate bar) will satisfy a sweet craving while giving you a good dose of flavonoids.

• **Take your tea in any color you like.** Two or three cups a day — of green, black, or even white tea — will nicely boost your flavonoid intake. Skip the cream and sugar, though, and stick to decaf if you have trouble sleeping. Be aware that most teas contain Vitamin K. Do not change your intake of tea if you are on blood-thinning medication.

• **Enjoy your wine in moderation.** If you don’t drink, don’t start. If you do, keep it to the limits listed at left. You’ll get the most benefit from wine’s flavonoids with the least risk.
### Building Block 6:
**Limit sodium (salt), sugar, and alcohol**

#### TARGETS

**Sodium:** Keep your sodium intake to 2,400 mg a day or less.

The 2013 AHA/ACC Lifestyle Management Guidelines recommend that most people limit salt to 2,400 mg or less per day. Cutting back to 1,500 mg per day may lower blood pressure even more.

If you have heart failure or high blood pressure, it's doubly important to stick to this limit. If you have heart failure, you may also need to follow an eating plan that limits fluids and alcohol in your diet.

**Sugar:** Avoid foods and drinks with added sugar, except as an occasional treat.

The American Heart Association recommends most adults consume 5 to 9 teaspoons daily. People over age 71 should have 3 teaspoons.

**Alcohol:** If you don't drink, don't start. If you do, keep it light.

Women should have no more than 1 drink a day. Men should have no more than 1 to 2 drinks a day.

#### TIPS

**To meet your sodium target, here's what you need to do.**

- **Follow a diet based on the previous building blocks.** Together, they stack up to a heart-healthy diet with few processed foods.
- **Avoid adding salt to your food** while cooking or at the table.
- **Be aware that nearly all the foods you eat contain a little bit of sodium.** Check food labels closely, and keep track of your total sodium intake each day.
- **Avoid processed foods,** which are typically high in salt. For example, most canned foods, potato chips, pretzels, crackers, lunch meats, salted nuts, and frozen dinners contain a lot of salt.
- **If you have a water softener,** don’t use softened water for drinking or cooking water. Water softeners add quite a bit of sodium to the water.
- **Check medication labels.** Many over-the-counter medications such as laxatives, pain relievers, or heartburn medicine contain sodium. Ask your healthcare provider before you make any medication changes.
- **Use spices or flavorful foods** such as onions and garlic to season meals without adding salt. However, watch out for onion salt and garlic salt, which contain sodium.
Shopping, Cooking, and Dining Out

To change what goes on your plate (and in your mouth), you’ll need to change how you shop for groceries, cook your meals, and order your food at restaurants. This section will help you make these changes.

Reading food labels

Reading labels can help you make healthy food choices. Look for key words and health claims that fit the requirements of your eating plan. For example, look first for foods labeled “high fiber” or “reduced sodium.”

Even more importantly, pay close attention to the “Nutrition Facts” section of a food label. Look at the “% Daily Value” for each nutrient. A 5% or less means the food is low in that nutrient. A 20% or higher means the food is high in that nutrient.

TRUTH IN LABELING

Federal law governs the key words, health claims, and nutrition facts that appear on a food product label. This makes food labels a trustworthy and valuable resource for heart-healthy eating. Always read food labels and packaging carefully. Use the glossary on page 31 for help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serving size:</strong> Serving Size 1 cup (239g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Servings per container about 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount per Serving</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Calories 100 Calories from Fat 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 % Daily Value *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Total Fat 2.5g 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Saturated Fat 1g 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Trans Fat 0.5g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Cholesterol 15mg 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Sodium 850mg 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Dietary Fiber 1g 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sugars 1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 7g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though a food label may list “0 grams” per portion, there still may be some of that nutrient in the food. For example, a label for a nonstick spray may define a portion as three sprays and list “0 grams” of total fat in each portion — but if you use more than three sprays, you may be getting some fat after all.

1. **Serving size:** Is the serving size appropriate for you? If not, you’ll need to adjust the nutrient and calorie values accordingly.
2. **Calories:** Different people need a different number of calories each day. Look here to see how a serving adds to your daily count.
3. **% Daily value:** The daily values on food labels are listed for people who should consume 2,000 calories (or 2,500 calories) per day. YOUR daily values may be different.
4. **Total fat:** Aim low here. For heart-healthier eating, choose foods lower in total fat. Beware of entrees that have more than 10 grams of fat per serving, or other foods that have more than 3 grams of fat. Notice that polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats are included under “Total Fat” but are not listed separately.
5. **Saturated fat:** Eat as little of this as possible. Saturated fat raises blood cholesterol.
6. **Trans fat:** Eat as little of this as possible. Trans fat raises blood cholesterol and lowers HDL.
7. **Cholesterol:** Too much cholesterol can lead to heart disease. Aim for 200 mg a day or less.
8. **Sodium:** Most of us consume far more sodium (salt) than we need — and prepared and processed foods can be the cause.
9. **Dietary fiber:** Aim for 25 to 30 grams of fiber each day, with most of this coming from whole grains.
10. **Sugars:** Compare the sugar grams with the total carbohydrate grams. If the numbers are close to the same, the product is high in sugar, and not the best choice.
Modifying recipes

With a little creativity and planning, most recipes can be made heart-healthy — often with little or no change in taste or texture. To lower the fat, cholesterol, and sodium content of your favorite recipes, first check the list of ingredients. Identify any ingredients you need to avoid or reduce, and apply one of these methods:

- **Elimination.** If the ingredient isn’t essential, don’t use it! For example, you can leave the salt out of many recipes and still have good results.
- **Reduction.** Can you use less of a particular ingredient? Many recipes will still turn out beautifully if you use less sugar, fat, or oil.
- **Substitution.** Here’s your chance to be truly creative: what ingredient substitutions can you make to produce healthier dishes? The table below presents a few tried-and-true food substitutions.

### Instead of this INGREDIENT... | Try this SUBSTITUTE...
--- | ---
1 cup butter | • ½ to 1 cup margarine with a liquid vegetable oil as the first ingredient
1 cup lard | • ½ to 1 cup vegetable oil (preferably olive, canola, safflower, corn, soybean, or sesame oil)
1 cup shortening | • ¾ cup oil, especially for cookies and breads (food will be crisper)
 | • 1 cup applesauce, especially for cakes, muffins, and quick breads (food will be moister)
1 cup whole milk | • 1 cup skim or 1% milk
 | • Nonfat powdered milk, reconstituted
 | • 1 cup plain low-fat soymilk or rice milk
1 cup cream | • 1 cup evaporated skim milk
1 cup shredded cheese | • ½ to 1 cup lower-fat cheese (Alpine Lace, Free N’ Lean, etc.)
 | • ¼ cup very sharp cheese
 | • Mix ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese with ½ cup lower-fat or regular cheese for casseroles
1 tablespoon salad dressing | • ½ to 1 tablespoon low-calorie salad dressing
1 cup whipped cream | • Homemade substitute (mix ¼ cup ice water with ¼ cup nonfat milk powder — sprinkle powder into water to avoid lumps — beat until thick, then add ¼ teaspoon vanilla, ½ teaspoon lemon juice, and ¼ cup sugar)
 | • Nonfat or low-fat vanilla yogurt

*Note: Nondairy whipped toppings are available in high-fat and low-fat versions.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of this</th>
<th>Try this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INGREDIENT...</strong></td>
<td><strong>SUBSTITUTE...</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 cup mayonnaise | • 1 cup nonfat or low-fat yogurt  
• ¼ cup plain low-fat yogurt mixed with ¼ cup or less low-calorie mayonnaise  
• 1 cup low-calorie imitation, light, or fat-free mayonnaise |
| 1 ounce cream cheese | • 1 ounce Neufchatel cheese  
• 1 ounce light cream cheese  
• 1 ounce fat-free ricotta cheese |
| 1 cup sour cream | • 1 cup plain or low-fat yogurt  
• 1 cup lower-fat or nonfat sour cream  
• 1 cup homemade mock sour cream (blend 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese, 2 tablespoons buttermilk, and ½ to 1 teaspoon of fresh lemon juice in a blender until smooth) |
| 1 cup creamed soup | • 1 cup low-fat, healthy creamed soup  
• For homemade creamed soup base, mix 2 cups nonfat powdered milk, ½ cup flour, ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons cornstarch, ½ cup granulated bouillon, ½ teaspoon salt. To make soup from this base, add ½ cup dry mix to 1¼ cups water. Blend in favorite vegetables. |
| 1 ounce square baking chocolate | • 3 tablespoons cocoa powder plus 1 tablespoon oil |
| 1 pound ground beef | • 1 pound or less extra-lean ground beef (7% fat or less)  
• 1 pound vegetables (for lasagna or pasta sauces, try zucchini or mushrooms)  
• 1 pound tofu  
• 1 pound lean poultry (turkey or chicken)  
*Note: To lose more fat, use ¼ pound less per person and drain the fat after cooking. If beef is browned before being added to a sauce or casserole, you can rinse it in hot water.* |
| Salt | To lower your salt intake, experiment with other herbs and spices to add flavor to your meals. Here are just a few examples:  
• Allspice: stew, tomatoes, peaches, applesauce, gravies  
• Basil: fish, lamb, salads, Italian sauces  
• Cinnamon: fruits, pork, bread, sweet potatoes, squash, plain yogurt  
• Cumin: chili, stews, beans  
• Curry: lean meats, chicken, fish, tomatoes, sauces, rice  
• Dill: fish, chicken, vegetables, potatoes, salads, pasta  
• Garlic: lean meats, fish, poultry, soups, salads, vegetables, pasta dishes  
• Lemon or lime juice: fish, poultry, salads, vegetables, sauces  
• Nutmeg: potatoes, chicken, fish, cauliflower, broccoli, and cabbage dishes  
• Onion: lean meats, stews, vegetables, salads, soups, legumes  
• Oregano: sauces, Italian dishes, pizza, salads, vegetables  
• Paprika: fish, poultry, soups, salads, meats, sauces, baked potatoes, beans  
• Rosemary: chicken, fish, lean pork sauces, stuffing, potatoes, peas, lima beans  
• Sesame seeds: salads, breads, chicken, vegetables, casseroles  
• Tarragon: sauces, salad dressings, marinades, vegetables, beets, chicken, fish  
• Thyme: lean meats, poultry, sauces, soups, peas, salads, tomatoes |
Preparing foods

The way you prepare foods can have a big impact on how healthy they are. Here are a few guidelines for heart-healthy cooking:

• Steam, broil, bake, or grill foods whenever possible.
• If you must fry, use a nonstick cooking spray and nonstick cookware instead of oil.
• When cooking stew, soups, or other dishes in which the fat cooks into the liquid, prepare food a day in advance and refrigerate it. You can easily remove the hardened fat from the food before reheating. (This trick also works well for fatty canned foods — simply chill the can before opening and remove the hardened fat.)
• Sauté or stir-fry vegetables in liquid rather than butter or oil. Good liquids for sautéing include water, bouillon, or de-fatted chicken, vegetable, or beef stock.
• Roast, bake, barbecue, or broil meat on a rack so that fat drips away from the meat.
• To enhance the flavor of low-fat cuts of meat, rub a salt-free seasoning blend on the meat. Spray a pan with oil and sear the meat on medium heat, then add a bit of water or salt-free broth to the pan until it just touches the meat. Cover the pan, turn the temperature down to low, and finish cooking.
• When making gravy, add a few ice cubes to cooled meat drippings. The fat will cling to the ice cubes, which you can then remove. The result is a tasty, low-fat gravy.
• Use vegetable puree to thicken gravies, sauces, soups, and stews. To make vegetable puree, process cooked vegetables in a blender.
Dining out

Heart-healthy eating doesn’t mean you have to prepare all your own meals at home for the rest of your life. If you enjoy eating out, you should certainly continue — it just requires a little extra thought and flexibility on your part. This section provides a few strategies to help you make good choices when dining out.

Choosing a restaurant

You should be able to find something healthy to eat at most restaurants. However, keep in mind the following points:

- Fast-food restaurants are notorious for serving meals that are high in fat, cholesterol, salt, and calories. However, most places offer some healthier choices as well. Tips for eating at fast-food places include:
  - Choose chicken or fish entrees instead of beef or pork. Avoid breaded meats.
  - Skip the “super-sized” version of your meal. Even if you’re not trying to lose weight, a “biggie” meal is probably more than you need to eat at one sitting. (Some super-sized meals have more fat and calories than you need in an entire day!)

- Restaurants with salad bars are a good option. A trip to the salad bar can make it easier to get all your daily vegetables and fruits — and also fill you up. To make a healthy salad:
  - Limit fatty meats and cheese. Choose healthier options such as beans, nuts, and seeds.
  - Watch out for salad dressings (which may contain a lot of salt and fat). Choose a reduced-fat dressing or use a flavored vinegar and a drizzle of olive oil.

- With ethnic dining, there are no absolutes like “Mexican food is unhealthy” or “Japanese food is good for you.” You just have to use good sense when you choose from the menu. The table on the next page gives you some tips on how to choose restaurant foods wisely.

SELECT YOUR SALAD SENSIBLY

Remember, watch out for salad dressings — which may contain a lot of salt and fat — and salty, fatty meats and cheeses. Limit these items, or choose healthier alternatives.

IS DIET SODA A GOOD CHOICE?

Most people know that drinking sugary soda pop is unhealthy. But is diet soda a healthy way to go?

Actually, recent research has shown a relationship between drinking diet soda and gaining weight. The best choice is water — save soda for special occasions.
Avoiding restaurant excess
Restaurants tend to give you large servings. To avoid eating too many calories, salt, fat, or cholesterol in one meal, consider the following tactics:

- **Drink water** (unless you are on a fluid-restricted diet). Sipping water throughout the meal can help you avoid overeating or drinking too much alcohol.

- **Beware the breadbasket.** After choosing one piece of bread, ask that the breadbasket be removed (or move it to the other side of the table). Ask for olive oil instead of butter.

- **Ask that your food be prepared without added salt.**

- **Split a meal with a friend.**

- **Reconsider dessert.** There are a lot of ways you can still enjoy an end-of-meal treat — without too much fat, sugar, or calories. You can share a dessert with a friend or two, enjoy a hot beverage, or order fresh fruit as a dessert.

- **Take food home.** Once you’ve eaten an appropriate amount, stop eating. Take leftover food home to enjoy later or share with someone else.

Choosing healthy foods while dining out
To make healthy choices at a restaurant, it helps to know a few cooking terms. These are clues about ingredients and preparation methods — and help you make better choices from the menu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CHOOSE foods that are described as:</strong></th>
<th><strong>AVOID foods that are described as:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Steamed</td>
<td>• Butter, buttered, in butter sauces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In its own juice</td>
<td>• Creamed, in cream sauce, in its own gravy, hollandaise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Garden fresh</td>
<td>• Au gratin, Parmesan, in cheese sauce, scalloped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Broiled</td>
<td>• Sautéed, fried, pan-fried, crispy, braised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Roasted</td>
<td>• Breaded, stuffed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poached</td>
<td>• Casserole, prime, hash, pot pie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dry broiled (in lemon juice or butter)</td>
<td>• Marinated (in oil), basted in butter or gravy, in brine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK YOUR SERVER
Keep in mind that you can always ask your server about ingredients and cooking methods. You can also ask whether a particular dish can be prepared in a heart-healthier way. For example, many restaurants will be happy to prepare your meal without salt, steamed rather than fried, and with sauces, gravies, and dressings served “on the side.”

KEEP IT SIMPLE
A good rule of thumb for choosing heart-healthy entrees: Choose foods in their simplest forms. For example, skinless chicken breast is a better choice than breaded chicken, and a broiled fish fillet is better than stuffed fish.
Go, slow, and whoa: traffic control for your plate

Use this chart to help you remember which foods you should eat most often (Go!), eat occasionally (Slow!), and avoid or eat sparingly (Whoa!).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food type</th>
<th>Go! Eat these!</th>
<th>Slow! Eat a little</th>
<th>Whoa! Avoid these!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>● All whole fruits</td>
<td>● Fruit juice</td>
<td>● Sweetened fruit juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Frozen fruit with no added sugar</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Fruit canned in syrup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>● Fresh and frozen vegetables</td>
<td>● Avocado</td>
<td>● Vegetables in butter or cream sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Canned vegetables that have been rinsed and drained, or low-sodium varieties</td>
<td>● Canned vegetables</td>
<td>● Fried or glazed vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Low-sodium vegetable juices</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Salted or pickled vegetables, including sauerkraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breads, cereals and snacks</td>
<td>● Whole-grain bread</td>
<td>● Home-made pancakes, muffins, and waffles</td>
<td>● Regular vegetable juices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Brown rice</td>
<td>● White bread, white rice, and white pasta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Whole-wheat couscous, quinoa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Oatmeal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Whole-wheat bagels, pasta, and whole-wheat and corn tortillas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Low-fat, low-sodium crackers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Rye or rice wafers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Air-popped popcorn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes and other starchy</td>
<td>● White or sweet potatoes (whole, with skin on)</td>
<td>● Margarine that is not “trans fat free”</td>
<td>● Cottonseed, palm, or coconut oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetables</td>
<td>(whole, with skin on)</td>
<td>(still look for liquid vegetable oil as the first ingredient)</td>
<td>● Regular mayonnaise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Corn (without salt or butter)</td>
<td>● (See box below for nuts and seeds)</td>
<td>● Lard or solid shortening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Green peas</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats and oils</td>
<td>● Margarine that is “trans fat free”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Monounsaturated oils: peanut, olive or canola oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Polyunsaturated oils: safflower, sunflower, soybean, or corn oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meats and meat substitutes</td>
<td>● Fish: trout, halibut, salmon, cod, water-packed tuna or salmon, shellfish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Poultry: skinless white-meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Lean beef: round, flank, sirloin, strip, extra-lean ground</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Lean pork: sirloin, tenderloin, loin chops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Lean veal: top round, leg cutlet, chop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Leg of lamb, well-trimmed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Beans and lentils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk and milk products</td>
<td>● 1% or skim milk, nonfat dry milk, evaporated skim milk, fortified soymilk</td>
<td>● Shrimp, lobster</td>
<td>● Prime and rib meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and frozen desserts</td>
<td>● Nonfat or low-fat yogurt</td>
<td>● Dark meat poultry and lightly marbled beef or pork</td>
<td>● Restaurant hamburgers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Low-fat cottage cheese</td>
<td>● Peanut butter</td>
<td>● Luncheon meats and cold cuts (ham, bologna, pastrami, salami)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Fat-free cheese</td>
<td>● Eggs (1 large per day)</td>
<td>● Pepperoni and pizza meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Fat-free sour cream</td>
<td>● Raw nuts: walnuts, pecans, almonds, peanuts, Brazil nuts</td>
<td>● Organ meats (kidney, liver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Fat-free whipped topping</td>
<td>● Unsalted seeds: pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds</td>
<td>● Sausage, bacon, fried meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td>● Water</td>
<td>● Natural peanut butter</td>
<td>● Pickled meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Coffee, tea, and other beverages</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Salted or honey-roasted nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Alcoholic drinks, including wine and beer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Fruit juice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Any beverage (including alcoholic) containing whole milk, cream, half and half, or chocolate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A heart-healthy sample menu

Eating according to the six heart-healthy building blocks is one of the best things you can do to lower your cardiac risk factors. As you learn to make healthier choices in your diet, you might be surprised at how many different — and delicious — options you have for meals and snacks. The sample menu below shows how much variety and good taste you can have in an ordinary day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BREAKFAST</th>
<th>SNACK</th>
<th>LUNCH</th>
<th>SNACK</th>
<th>DINNER</th>
<th>SNACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1 cup oatmeal with cinnamon, almonds, and 1 teaspoon brown sugar</td>
<td>• Dried fruit and nut trail mix (½ cup)</td>
<td>• Tuna sandwich on whole grain bread (served with low-fat mayonnaise, lettuce, tomato, and avocado)</td>
<td>• 1 cup light yogurt</td>
<td>• Tossed salad with olive oil vinaigrette</td>
<td>• 3 cups air-popped popcorn with olive oil spray or with margarine labeled “trans fat free”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 cup skim or soymilk</td>
<td>• 1 small banana</td>
<td>• 1 cup fresh melon</td>
<td>• 1 cup fresh berries</td>
<td>• 3 ounces tofu, skinless chicken, or fish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low-fat or nonfat yogurt</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Celery and carrot sticks</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 cup brown rice pilaf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log on to www.choosemyplate.gov for personalized meal plans, meal tracking worksheets, and more tips and resources.

MY RISK FACTORS:

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__________________________
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__________________________

NUTRITION GOALS TO REDUCE MY RISKS:

__________________________
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28 NUTRITION FOR A HEALTHY HEART Live Well
Resources

In this section you’ll find resources to help you change your eating patterns for the better, including heart-healthy cookbooks, websites and phone numbers, and a glossary of food packaging terms.

Heart-healthy cookbooks


American Heart Association Meals in Minutes Cookbook: Over 200 All-New Quick and Easy Low-Fat Recipes. American Heart Association, 2002.


Cooking Smart for a Healthy Heart. Reader’s Digest, 2008.


CHOOSING A COOKBOOK

A good way to review a new cookbook is to check it out from your public library before buying it. This way you can see if the recipes fit your tastes and lifestyle (for example, gourmet or simple, ethnic or mainstream). Here are a few other things to look for:

• Sound nutrition principles. Steer clear of fad diet books that offer “quick-fixes.”
• Recipes that are generally low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
• Easy-to-find ingredients.
• Easy-to-follow instructions.
• Recipes that provide nutrition information (for example, list calories, fat grams, cholesterol, sodium, and so on).

MORE RECIPE RESOURCES

Look for these magazines at your supermarket or online:

Cooking Light (www.cookinglight.com)

EatingWell (www.eatingwell.com)

Vegetarian Times (www.vegetariantimes.com)
Intermountain offers a variety of classes and support programs to help you live a heart-healthy lifestyle. Contact your local facility for more information on the following services:

- Support for quitting tobacco
- Health and physical fitness evaluations
- Diabetes education
- Cardiac rehabilitation

Also, check out the Health Topics page on Intermountain’s website to find handouts to help you learn more. Go to: [intermountainhealthcare.org/health-resources/health-topics](http://intermountainhealthcare.org/health-resources/health-topics)

Search for a topic or browse the A to Z menu to find resources on these topics:

- High blood pressure: *BP Basics*
- High blood glucose: *Pre-Diabetes: Act Now to Protect Your Health*
- Diabetes: *Living Well: A Diabetes Care Handbook*
- High cholesterol: *Understanding Cholesterol*
- Tobacco use: *Quitting Tobacco: Your Journey to Freedom*
- Weight Management: *The Weigh to Health*

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**Websites and phone numbers**

The organizations and services below provide information and support for good nutrition and other elements of a healthy lifestyle.

- **Intermountain Healthcare:** 801-442-2000  
  [www.intermountainhealthcare.org/nutrition](http://www.intermountainhealthcare.org/nutrition)
- **American Diabetes Association:** 800-342-2383  
  [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:**  
  [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)
- **American Heart Association (AHA):** 800-242-8721  
  [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)
- **AHA Dietary Information:**  
  [www.heart.org/nutrition](http://www.heart.org/nutrition)
- **Healthy People 2020:**  
  [www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov)
- **National Diabetes Education Program:**  
  [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov)
- **Weight-control Information Network (WIN):**  
  [win.niddk.nih.gov](http://win.niddk.nih.gov)

**Weigh to Health program**

If you’d like help with nutrition counseling and weight loss, check out the Weigh to Health program. The Weigh to Health program is a 6-month course of group classes that meets 2 times per month. This program is available at many Intermountain hospitals, including:

- Alta View
- American Fork
- Cassia
- Dixie Regional
- Intermountain Medical Center
- LDS Hospital
- Logan Regional
- McKay-Dee
- Park City
- Riverton
- Utah Valley Regional Medical Center

To get started, go to [www.intermountainhealthcare.org/nutrition](http://www.intermountainhealthcare.org/nutrition) and click this link: **Weigh to Health Program**.
Glossary of food packaging terms

This glossary spells out what to expect when you see certain terms on a package or label.

**cholesterol free**
Less than 2 milligrams of cholesterol and 2 grams (or less) of saturated fat per serving.

**extra lean**
Less than 5 grams fat, less than 2 grams saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams cholesterol per serving.

**fat free**
Less than ½ gram of fat per serving.

**low-fat**
3 grams of fat or less per serving.

**lean**
Less than 10 grams of fat, 4 grams of saturated fat, and 95 milligrams of cholesterol per serving.

**light (lite)**
This term can mean several things — check the Nutrition Facts on the label to find out which:
• A third less calories, or no more than half the fat, of the original version of the product.
• No more than half the sodium compared to the original version of the product.
• A lighter color or texture — this does not affect the nutrition of the product.

**low cholesterol**
Less than 20 milligrams of cholesterol and 2 grams (or less) of saturated fat per serving.

**low sodium**
140 milligrams or less of sodium per serving.

**no added salt**
No salt is added during processing — this does not guarantee the food product is sodium-free.

**reduced sodium**
25% less sodium than the original version of the product.

**sodium-free**
Less than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving.

**very low sodium**
35 milligrams or less of sodium per serving.

**unsalted**
No salt is added during processing — this does not guarantee the food product is sodium-free.