

 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.



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Eating healthy foods is one of the best things you can do for your heart. Heart-healthy eating should be creative and fun. This booklet will help you learn about heart-healthy eating and how to make it easy and enjoyable. Besides, heart-healthy eating can help you live a healthier life over all.

As you read, keep in mind that your registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) will create a meal plan that is specific to your health needs and your tastes. If your those instructions are different from what's in this booklet, always follow what your healthcare providers tell you to do.

Rx FOR AN RDN

Your healthcare providers may ask you to see a **Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)**. An RDN will help you make changes in your diet, teach you about nutrition, help you choose foods and plan menus, follow **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.

Changing what I eat was the hardest 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 numbers on the labels are just for one serving, not for the whole package. So when you start to add it up, you can see that you're getting way too much fat and salt. Anyway, my reward is seeing how healthier eating makes a difference. With medicine and a good diet, my cholesterol is down quite a bit. ”

— GORDON,
diagnosed with high cholesterol

NOTE: It's important to keep eating healthy even if your cholesterol goes back down to normal after you start taking medicine. For high cholesterol, the best treatment is a healthy diet and medicine, if prescribed by your doctor.

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 things that increase your chance of developing coronary disease or heart disease. The major cardiac risk factors can be divided into two groups:

- **Risk factors you cannot change.** These include age, sex, family history of heart disease, and a personal history of heart problems.
- **Risk factors you can change.** These include an unhealthy diet, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, high blood glucose (sugar), inflammation, prediabetes or diabetes, smoking, physical inactivity, overweight and obesity, sleep problems, and stress.

How can healthy eating help?

Healthy eating can help you control or eliminate major cardiac risk factors by:

- Improving your blood cholesterol (LDL, HDL) and triglycerides
- Losing excess weight
- Controlling blood sugar and diabetes
- Lowering your blood pressure
- Decreasing inflammation

A healthy diet can help heart, blood pressure, or cholesterol medicines work better (when taken routinely) 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. Your body needs it to function normally. Your liver makes cholesterol and certain foods can raise it (for example, foods that come from animals, such as red meat and full-fat dairy products). High levels of cholesterol in your blood can cause coronary artery disease. Your healthcare provider will test your blood for:

- High levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol
- Low levels of HDL (good) cholesterol
- High levels of total 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 your blood glucose levels are moderately high, you may have a condition called **prediabetes**. If you have prediabetes, now is the perfect time to get your blood glucose under control through changes in your diet. If you are overweight, the best way to start losing weight is with diet and exercise.

Check out the USDA's choosemyplate.gov website. There, you will find lots of nutrition information and interactive tools, including a menu planner that you can tailor to your age, sex, and activity level.



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 the news today, it may seem like there are no clear answers to these questions.

The truth is, **there is a lot of agreement about how to eat to protect your heart.** Research from the past 20 years 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 of your plate will be filled with vegetables and fruits.

(See [page 7](#).)



2

Choose whole and unprocessed grains

Grains and starches together will fill about $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate for most meals.

(See [page 9](#).)

3

Choose heart-healthy proteins.

A healthy portion will take up about $\frac{1}{4}$ 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](#).)





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

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 or tomato juice (low sodium)



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, a splash of 100% juice and lowfat plain yogurt.
- 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.*

**Dark green, leafy vegetables are high in vitamin K, which may interfere with anticoagulant medicines such as warfarin (Coumadin). If you take an anticoagulant (sometimes called a blood thinner), be consistent about how many vitamin K-rich foods you eat. For example, if you ate 4 salads a week before starting your anticoagulant, keep eating 4 salads a week. Ask your healthcare providers for more information.*

Do not eat grapefruit and grapefruit juice while taking blood pressure or cholesterol lowering medicines unless your doctor says it's okay.



TOP ANTIOXIDANT FOODS

These foods have the most antioxidants per serving:

- Dark green leafy vegetables (kale, collard greens, spinach, arugula)
- Kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, and red beans
- Blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, raspberries, strawberries, cherries, papaya, gogi berries
- Artichokes
- Prunes and plums
- Walnuts, pecans, and brazil nuts
- Apples

Spices such as cocoa, cinnamon, cloves, turmeric, cilantro, and oregano are also rich in antioxidants.

RED FOODS TO THE RESCUE

Research has shown that one particular antioxidant — lycopene — has anti-inflammatory effects. Reducing inflammation reduces the risk of heart disease and aids in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. Lycopene gives certain foods a red color. To help your heart, eat more of these red, lycopene-rich foods:

- Tomatoes, tomato juice, tomato soup, canned tomatoes
- Watermelon
- Strawberries
- Pink grapefruit

Eat lots of fruits and vegetables

It's probably no surprise to hear that **eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is good for your overall health**. 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** (see [page 10](#) for good food sources). Studies show that soluble fiber can lower blood cholesterol levels.
- Fruits and vegetables provide **antioxidants** [an-tye-OX-eh-dents] such as vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene [bay-tuh-CARE-uh-teen], lycopene [LYE-cuh-peen], lutein [LOO-tee-in] and quercetin [KWER-seh-tin]. Antioxidants protect against heart disease. Studies show that foods higher in antioxidants (see the list at right) work better than supplements (vitamin pills) to promote heart health.
- Fruits and vegetables are an important source of **minerals** such as calcium, potassium [poh-TASS-ee-uhm], and magnesium [mag-NEE-zee-uhm]. These minerals can help lower blood pressure and keep your electrolytes [ee-LEK-troh-lytes] in proper balance.
- Many fruits and vegetables contain **flavonoids** [FLAY-ven-noidz], a kind of plant nutrient (**phytonutrient** [fye-toe-NU-tree-ent]) that can aid heart health. The best sources of flavonoids are:
 - Red, blue, and purple fruits, such as berries, apples, and red or purple grapes
 - Tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, and onions
 - Soybeans and other legumes [lay-GOOMZ]
 - Kale and parsley
 - White, green, or oolong teas





Building Block 2:

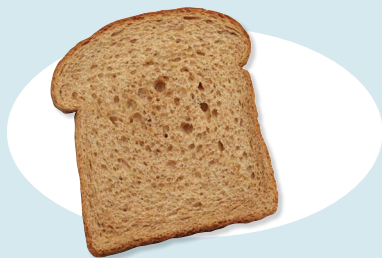
Eat more whole grains

TIPS

Aim for 5 to 6 servings (about 5 to 6 ounces total) of grain and other starches every day. Try to make at least half of the servings whole grains.

SAMPLE SERVINGS (PORTIONS)

- 1 slice (1 ounce) of 100% whole grain bread
- 1/3 cup cooked brown rice, bulgur, barley, millet, or quinoa
- 1/2 cup whole grain cereal or cooked oatmeal
- 1/3 cup cooked whole wheat pasta or whole wheat couscous
- 1/4 large baked potato
- 1/2 cup sweet potato
- 7 to 15 whole grain crackers
- 3 cups air-popped popcorn
- 1/2 cup corn



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 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.
- **Experiment with legumes.** Try lentils, navy beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), white beans, Anasazi 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)



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.

Guidelines recommend eating a minimum of 25–38 grams of fiber daily.

Soluble fiber (marked with * below) is especially important for lowering LDL cholesterol. The following are good sources of fiber:

- Whole wheat cold cereals
- *Oatmeal, steel cut or whole oats, oat bran
- Whole rye, barley, buckwheat, bulgur, farro, millet, triticale, sorghum, and spelt
- Brown, black, and wild rice
- *Psyllium [SIHL-lee-uhm] husk or seeds, found in some bran cereals and in fiber supplements
- *Legumes, such as split peas, cooked dried beans, lentils, and edamame
- Nuts
- Pectin, found in fruits such as apples, oranges, pears, prunes, apricots, blackberries, passion fruit, figs, and mangos
- Vegetables, especially broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, artichokes, winter squash, turnips, asparagus, and avocado
- Sweet potatoes
- *Ground flax and chia seeds
- Whole wheat pasta and couscous

Eat more whole grains

Foods like bread, rice, and pasta are a key ingredient in diets all over the world. But as with other foods, some grains and starches are better for your heart than others.

Whole grains and other unprocessed starches: The healthiest choice

Whole grain foods include all parts of the grain kernel (the bran, the germ, 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, stroke, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- **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, folate (folic acid), and minerals like magnesium, copper, iron, selenium, and zinc.

Whole grains: 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: Beans and vegetables, such as whole white and sweet potatoes, acorn, butternut, or spaghetti squash, peas, and corn, are good examples. When simply prepared with little or no fat, and eaten with the skin on (if appropriate), these starchy vegetables provide even more fiber and other nutrients.

Refined grains: The less healthy choice

Refined (or processed) grains have had the bran and often the germ removed from the grain, stripping away fiber and many other important nutrients. 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, rapidly absorbed, can cause spikes in blood glucose, increase triglyceride levels, and give you only short-lived energy.



Building Block 3:

Choose heart-healthy proteins

TARGETS

Eat 2–3 servings (about 4–6 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 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
- 1 ounce raw nuts or peanuts
- ¼ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 ounce seeds

TIPS

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

- Avoid processed meats. Foods such as hot dogs, bacon, sausage, pepperoni, 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 (not including your fingers). If it's bigger than that, it's more than one portion.
- Experiment with meatless recipes. Try adding beans, low-fat cheese, or tofu to your favorite recipes.
- Check out a vegetarian cookbook for new tasty, filling, and easy-to-prepare meals.

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 of toasted nuts and/or seeds to any whole-grain cold or hot breakfast cereal.
- Steer clear of high-fat breakfast meats such as bacon and sausage. Many grocery stores and specialty stores carry healthy vegetarian alternatives.



For lunch and dinner:

- Choose a cottage-cheese-and-fruit plate for an easy light meal.
- Use flavored, baked tofu in stir-fry dishes.
- Turn an ordinary salad into a high-protein meal by topping it with grilled chicken, tuna or salmon, 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, using navy or black beans.

For snacks:

- Choose nuts or seeds instead of pretzels or chips.
- Serve hummus 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 (edamame) make a terrific high-protein snack. (Remember to remove the pod.)

HOW MUCH DIETARY CHOLESTEROL?

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.

You need cholesterol for your body to function normally. But many foods that come from animals also have high amounts of saturated fats. It's best to limit the amount of these foods so that you don't increase your risk for **atherosclerosis** [ath-eh-roh-skler-OH-sis] (narrowed arteries due to fat and plaque build up on the artery walls).

Note: Many of these food products do not come with nutrition labels. Some product labels say the item is "low cholesterol" when the food item didn't contain cholesterol to begin with.

HOW MUCH SEAFOOD?

People who eat seafood 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 examples include:

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

Taking fish oil pills rich in omega-3 fatty acids does not appear to lower 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).*

Choose heart-healthy proteins

Protein is an important part of a healthy diet. Protein helps repair body tissues and build muscles—including your heart muscle. Unfortunately, many sources of protein are high in saturated fat. 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.

This information will help you choose proteins from both animal and plant sources that are low in saturated fat and trans fat. 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 breasts) are all good sources of lean protein. Watch out for poultry such as duck and goose, which are higher in fat.
- **Eggs:** The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans say that "eggs are an affordable, accessible, nutrient-rich source of high-quality protein that can help Americans build healthful diets." Include eggs in your diet, but eat only 1 whole egg per day, or switch to egg whites or egg substitutes. Although the Guidelines reported that dietary cholesterol was no longer a nutrient for concern, may be appropriate for some individual (e.g., those with elevated LDL) to eat fewer egg yolks (180mg per egg).

What about other animal proteins, like beef and pork?

Some meats naturally have saturated fat and trans fats, so they don't get the "heart-healthy" label. But you can still eat them. Choose only lean cuts of meat (see sidebar), trim off the fat before cooking, and 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. And, they can be used in a number 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 the label for sodium before eating.
- **Nuts and peanuts:** Nuts are a great source of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and heart-healthy fats. Some studies say that eating at least 1 ounce of (unsalted) nuts per day reduces total and LDL cholesterol, which helps to lower your risk of heart disease. Some heart-healthy choices include: raw almonds, pistachios, pecans, peanuts, pine nuts, and walnuts.
- **Seeds:** Seeds, like nuts, give you protein as well as many other heart-healthy nutrients. A few good examples include pumpkin, sunflower, chia, ground flax, wheat germ, berry seeds, and sesame seeds. Use seeds on top of salads, hot cereals, or mixed into a healthy trail mix.



WHEN YOU CHOOSE MEATS

When planning meals with meat, stick to the leanest cuts. A few examples are listed below:

Lean beef ("choice" or "select" grade)

- Round or flank (Example: Round roast or side steak)
- Sirloin tip roast
- Steak (Top sirloin)
- Tenderloin rump
- Extra lean ground hamburger, ground round (97 % fat free)

Lean pork

- Sirloin roast
- Tenderloin
- Boneless center loin chops

Lean veal or lamb

Lamb leg, arm, or loin

Other meats

- Wild rabbit, bison, venison, elk
- Emu, ostrich, pheasant

VEGETARIANS AND VITAMIN B₁₂

Vitamin B₁₂ is an essential nutrient that is particularly important for your heart health. It's found in animal products such as fish, poultry, meat, eggs, and dairy products. While B₁₂ isn't naturally found in plant foods, many foods (such as some cereals and soy beverages) are fortified with it. If you're a strict vegetarian, you need to eat fortified foods daily—or take a supplement.

People over 50 have less ability to absorb vitamin B₁₂ in foods. They can get vitamin B₁₂ in supplements or fortified foods.

4

Building Block 4:

Choose unsaturated fats and oils

TARGETS

The American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology (AHA/ACC) recommend avoiding all trans fat and limiting saturated fat to less than 6% of total calories.

Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats should be substituted for trans fats and saturated fats.

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 will be able to hit these targets without crunching numbers.

TIPS

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

- Read food labels for saturated fat and trans fat.
- 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 avocado 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
 - Substitute hummus for mayonnaise on sandwiches



Choose unsaturated fats and oils

Some fats have the kind of nutrients to provide energy and help the body absorb fat-soluble nutrients. Fat also adds flavor and texture to meals and helps you feel satisfied after eating. Some fats are heart-healthy, while others may increase cardiac risk factors. This section shows you how to choose 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—when eaten 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, pistachios, cashews, and pecans
- **Polyunsaturated fats** are found in plant foods and some fish. Good sources include:

OMEGA 3 fatty acids	OMEGA 6 fatty acids
Fatty fish, such as salmon, herring, rainbow trout, halibut, oysters, tuna, sardines	Vegetable oils, such as corn, safflower, sesame, sunflower, cottonseed, flaxseed and soybean
Flaxseed, walnuts, canola oil (rapeseed oil), olive oil	Margarine (liquid or tub), trans-fat free
	Walnuts, brazil nuts, pine nuts

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. In some cases, your healthcare provider may recommend that you take supplements to help lower your triglyceride levels. If you do decide to take one, be sure your supplement contains the amounts your healthcare provider recommends. To figure the total amount of omega-3 fatty acids in the supplement, add the grams of EPA and DHA together.

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 and increase their intake of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Poly- and monounsaturated fats are healthier and associated with a lower risk of disease and death.

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. Two 4-ounce servings per week of following fish are recommended:

- Salmon (fresh or canned), herring, rainbow trout, mackerel, sardines, halibut, oysters, and tuna

Lesser amounts are found in these plant-based foods:

- Soybeans, soybean oil, and tofu
- Walnuts, ground flaxseeds, flaxseed oil, chia seeds, and pumpkin seeds
- Foods fortified with omega-3 fatty acids, such as eggs, margarine, juice, yogurt, milk, and soy milk





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. It's also important to avoid industrial 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, frosting, cookies, croissants, packaged pudding, donuts, pastries, biscuits, brownies, pies, pie crust and pie dough, and sweetrolls.
- Microwave and theater buttered popcorn
- All deep-fried foods, such as French fries, fish sticks, chicken nuggets, onion rings, and others
- Restaurant shakes and creamy drinks
- Frozen dinners (look for partially hydrogenated oil on the ingredient list), store-bought and frozen pizza.

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, T-bone steak, hamburgers, ham, bacon, sausage, pepperoni, hot dogs, salami, bologna, pastrami, liverwurst, poultry with skin, dark meat poultry, and chicken wings
 - High-fat dairy products such as whole and 2% milk, butter, cream, half and half, sour cream, regular creamed soups, regular cheese, cream and cheese sauces, whipped cream, and ice cream
 - Lard, salt pork, meat gravies from pan drippings, and beef tallow
 - Mixed dishes, such as frozen dinners with beef or pork, Italian and Mexican dishes with beef or pork and cheese
 - Mixed dishes with eggs, such as restaurant combination plates with pancakes, country-fried steak and eggs, ham and cheese omelet, T-bone steak and eggs, Philly cheesesteak and eggs
 - Other sources, such as crispy chicken sandwiches or fried fish sandwiches
- **Plant sources:**
 - Cocoa butter, coconut, and coconut milk
 - Tropical oils such as coconut, palm, palm kernel oil



Building Block 5:

Select low-fat dairy products and dairy alternatives

TARGETS

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

SAMPLE SERVINGS (PORTIONS)

- 1 cup 1 % or skim milk
- 1 cup fortified, unsweetened soymilk
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt or calcium-fortified soy yogurt
- 1 ounce low-fat cheese
- ¼ cup low-fat cottage cheese



TIPS



Tips for meeting this target include the following:

- Use 1 % 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, or use it on cereal or as a milk substitute in any recipe.
- Give yourself time to adjust to the taste of 1 % 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 and added sugar. Check the labels, and keep an eye out for low-fat or fat-free creamers and toppings low in sugar.
- 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.



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 ingredient list.
- Choose a specialty margarine containing substances called plant stanols and/or sterols. The label will include this information. Studies show that food supplemented with at least 2 to 3 grams of these substances can help reduce LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by 10% in 2 to 3 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. To lower cholesterol, you must have at least 1 bottled yogurt drink, or 2–3 servings of yogurt, juice, milk, cheese, breads or margarine daily.

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 saturated fat. Anyone looking to lower their cardiac risk factors should keep this in mind.

But, you don’t need to give up dairy products altogether. Sticking to low-fat dairy products or dairy alternatives will give you the same nutritional benefits without the drawbacks.

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.
- Try yogurt, cottage cheese, and cheese as they are lower in lactose than milk.



THE CALCIUM CONNECTION

Dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese are excellent sources of calcium. However 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.

6

Building Block 6:

Limit sodium (salt), sugar, and alcohol

TARGETS

Sodium: Keep your sodium intake to 2,300mg a day or less.

The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that most people limit salt to 2,300mg or less per day. Cutting back to 1,500mg per day may lower blood pressure even more.

If you have heart failure or high blood pressure, you will need to limit sodium to less than 2000mg per day. 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 no more than 9 teaspoons of sugar for men and 6 teaspoons of sugar for women per day.

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

- No more than 1 drink per day for non pregnant, adult women and 2 drinks per day for adult men
- Only when there is no risk to a health condition

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 medicine labels.** Many over-the-counter medicines such as laxatives, pain relievers, or heartburn medicine contain sodium. Ask your healthcare provider before you make any medicine 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.





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 choose 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 medicine.
- **Enjoy your red 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.

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:** One "drink" means 12 ounces of beer or a wine cooler, 5 ounces of 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)
- Spinach
- Tomatoes and tomato products
- Milk (skim or 1%) and plain yogurt (low- or nonfat)
- Legumes

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.

Shopping, Cooking, and Dining Out

To change what goes on your plate, 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.

Nutrition Facts		
8 servings per container		
Serving size 1 2/3 cup (55g)		
Amount per serving		
Calories 2		230
		3 % Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	4	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5	5%
Trans Fat 0g	6	
Cholesterol 0mg	7	0%
Sodium 160mg	8	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g		13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	9	14%
Total Sugars 12g	10	
Includes 10g Added Sugars		20%
Protein 3g		
Vitamin D 2mcg		10%
Calcium 260mg		20%
Iron 8mg		45%
Potassium 235mg		6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

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 right 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 based on 2,000 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 may contribute to heart disease in some people.
- 8 Sodium:** Most of us eat 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 Total Sugars:** Compare the total 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 and sodium in your favorite recipes, first check the list of ingredients. Choose the ingredients you need to avoid or reduce, and apply one of these methods:

- **Elimination.** If the ingredient isn't necessary, 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. Aim to reduce sugar in recipes by one quarter to one half of the called-for amount.
- **Substitution.** Here's your chance to be truly creative: what healthy ingredient can you use instead of an unhealthy one to make a healthier dish? The table below lists a few tried-and-true food substitutions.

ON SECOND THOUGHT...

Instead of changing your current recipes, you might want to check out the heart-healthy cookbooks and magazines listed on [page 29](#). Many explain how to prepare old favorites and new dishes in a heart-healthy way.

Instead of this INGREDIENT...	Try this SUBSTITUTE...
1 cup butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ to 1 cup margarine with a liquid vegetable oil as the first ingredient • Choose spreads such as avocado, hummus, natural peanut butter, or other nut butters
1 cup lard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ to 1 cup vegetable oil (preferably olive, canola, safflower, corn, soybean, or sesame oil)
1 cup shortening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¾ cup oil, especially for cookies and breads (food will be crispier) • 1 cup applesauce, pureed pumpkin, banana, or avocado, especially for cakes, muffins, and quick breads (food will be more moist)
1 cup whole milk or evaporated milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup skim or 1% milk, plain low-fat soymilk, or rice milk • Nonfat powdered milk, reconstituted • 1 cup skim evaporated milk
1 cup cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup evaporated skim milk
1 cup shredded cheese or cottage cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ to 1 cup lower-fat cheese (Alpine Lace, Free N' Lean, etc.) or lowfat ricotta cheese • 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 or mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ to 1 tablespoon low-calorie salad dressing • 1 tablespoon light or lowfat mayonnaise
1 cup whipped cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p><i>Note: Nondairy whipped toppings are available in high-fat and low-fat versions.</i></p>
1 whole egg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 egg whites or ¼ cup egg substitute

Instead of this INGREDIENT...	Try this SUBSTITUTE...
1 cup mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup nonfat or low-fat yogurt • ¾ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 ounce Neufchatel cheese • 1 ounce light cream cheese • 1 ounce fat-free ricotta cheese
1 cup sour cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, ⅓ cup granulated bouillon, ½ teaspoon salt. To make soup from this base, add ⅛ cup dry mix to 1 ¼ cups water. Blend in favorite vegetables.
1 ounce square baking chocolate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 tablespoons cocoa powder plus 1 tablespoon oil
1 pound ground beef or pork sausage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) <p><i>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.</i></p>
Salt	<p>To lower your salt intake, experiment with other herbs and spices to add flavor to your meals. Here are just a few examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 can 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 will be able to find something healthy to eat at most restaurants. However, keep in mind the following points:

- Fast-food restaurants are known 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.



ASK YOUR SERVER

Keep in mind that you can always ask your server about ingredients and cooking methods. You can also ask if 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.

Dining out (*continued*)

Restaurants tend to give you large servings. To avoid eating too many calories, salt, and fat in one meal, try one of these ideas:

- **Drink water** (unless you’re on a fluid-restricted diet). Sipping water while you eat 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 a normal serving, stop eating. Take the leftovers 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 few cooking terms. These are clues about ingredients and preparation methods and can help you make better choices from the menu.

CHOOSE foods that are described as:	AVOID foods that are described as:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steamed • In its own juice • Garden fresh • Broiled • Roasted • Poached • Dry broiled (in lemon juice or butter) • Lean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buttery, buttered, in butter sauces • Creamed, in cream sauce, in its own gravy, hollandaise • Au gratin, Parmesan, in cheese sauce, scalloped • Sautéed, fried, pan-fried, crispy, braised • Breaded, stuffed • Casserole, prime, hash, pot pie • Marinated (in oil), basted in butter or gravy, in brine

Go and Whoa: Traffic control for your plate



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

Food type	Go! Eat these!	Whoa! Avoid these!
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All whole fruits Frozen fruit with no added sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweetened fruit juice Fruit canned in syrup
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh and frozen vegetables Canned vegetables that have been rinsed and drained, or low-sodium varieties Low-sodium vegetable juices Avocado 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetables in butter or cream sauce Fried or glazed vegetables Salted or pickled vegetables, including sauerkraut Regular vegetable juices
Breads, cereals and snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole-grain bread, homemade pancakes, muffins, and waffles Brown rice, hulled barley Whole-wheat couscous, quinoa Oatmeal Whole-wheat bagels, pasta, and whole-wheat and corn tortillas Low-fat, low-sodium crackers Rye or rice wafers Air-popped popcorn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donuts and croissants Salty snacks: pretzels, chips, crackers, etc. Store-bought baked goods made with saturated fat or hydrogenated oils: muffins, cupcakes, sweet rolls, etc. Egg or chow mein noodles Fried rice
Potatoes and other starchy vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White or sweet potatoes (whole, with skin on) Corn (without salt or butter) Green peas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried potatoes: french fries, hash browns, tater tots Baked or mashed potatoes with butter and/or sour cream
Fats and oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Margarine that is “trans fat free” Monounsaturated oils: peanut, olive or canola oil Polyunsaturated oils: safflower, sunflower, soybean, or corn oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cottonseed, palm kernel oil, or coconut oil Regular mayonnaise Butter, lard or solid shortening
Meats and meat substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish and seafood: trout, halibut, salmon, cod, shrimp, lobster, crab, water-packed, canned tuna or salmon Poultry: skinless white-meat Lean beef: round, flank, sirloin, strip, extra-lean ground Lean pork: sirloin, tenderloin, loin chops Lean veal: top round, leg cutlet, chop Leg of lamb, well-trimmed Beans and lentils Natural peanut butter Eggs (1 large per day) Raw nuts: walnuts, pecans, almonds, peanuts, Brazil nuts Unsalted seeds: pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime and rib meats, marbled beef or pork Dark meat poultry Restaurant hamburgers Luncheon meats and cold cuts (ham, bologna, pastrami, salami) Pepperoni, pizza meats, store-bought frozen pizzas Organ meats (kidney, liver) Sausage, bacon, fried meats, pickled meats Chicken wings Pot pies, mixed meat, egg, and steak dishes Salted or honey-roasted nuts
Milk and milk products and frozen desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1% or skim milk, nonfat dry milk, evaporated skim milk, fortified soy milk Nonfat or low-fat yogurt Low-fat cottage cheese, and low-fat cheeses Fat-free cheese, sour cream, whipped topping Frozen yogurt, sherbet, sorbet, and gelato Pudding with nonfat milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole milk, 2% milk, and chocolate milk Cream and half & half Evaporated or condensed milk Sour cream and ice cream Whipped cream or nondairy whipped topping Milkshakes, creamy drinks
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water, coffee, and tea Alcoholic drinks, including wine and beer Fruit juice (½ cup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any beverage (including alcoholic) containing whole milk, cream, half and half, or chocolate

A Heart-healthy Sample Menu

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

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.

BREAKFAST	SNACK	LUNCH	SNACK	DINNER	SNACK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup oatmeal with cinnamon, almonds, and 1 teaspoon brown sugar • 1 cup skim or soymilk • 1 small banana • Low-fat or nonfat yogurt • ½ ounce raw nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruit • ½ ounce raw nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuna sandwich on whole grain bread (served with low-fat mayonnaise, lettuce, tomato, and avocado) • 1 cup fresh melon • Celery and carrot sticks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup lowfat yogurt • 1 cup fresh berries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green salad with vinaigrette or oil and vinegar dressing • 3 ounces tofu, skinless chicken, or fish • 1 cup brown rice pilaf • 1 cup grilled or steamed vegetables • Baked cinnamon apple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 cups air-popped popcorn with olive oil spray or with margarine labeled “trans fat free”

MY RISK FACTORS:

NUTRITION GOALS TO REDUCE MY RISKS:

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.

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 and sodium.
- Easy-to-find ingredients.
- Easy-to-follow instructions.
- Recipes that provide nutrition information (for example, list calories, fat grams, sodium, and so on).

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:

intermountainhealthcare.org/nutrition

801-442-2000

American Diabetes Association: diabetes.org

800-342-2383

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: eatright.org

American Heart Association (AHA): heart.org

800-242-8721

AHA Dietary Information: heart.org/nutrition

Healthy People 2020: healthypeople.gov

National Diabetes Education Program: ndep.nih.gov

Weight-control Information Network (WIN):

win.niddk.nih.gov



MORE RECIPE RESOURCES

Look for these magazines at your supermarket or online:

Cooking Light
(cookinglight.com)

EatingWell
(eatingwell.com)

Vegetarian Times
(vegetariantimes.com)



MORE FROM INTERMOUNTAIN HEALTHCARE

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

To learn more, check out the education handouts on the [Intermountain Healthcare website](#).

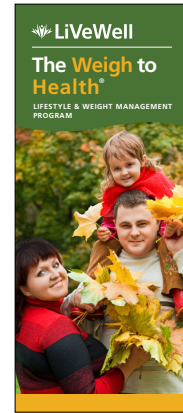
Search for a topic or browse the A to Z menu to find resources on these topics:

- 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*](#)

The Weigh to Health® program

If you'd like help with nutrition counseling and weight loss, check out **The Weigh to Health®** lifestyle and weight management program. The program is a 12-month course of 22 sessions and is available at many Intermountain hospitals, including:

- American Fork
- Cassia
- Dixie Regional
- Intermountain Medical Center
- LDS
- McKay-Dee
- Riverton
- Utah Valley Regional



To get started, click this link:

intermountainhealthcare.org/services/nutrition-services/services/weigh-to-health-nutrition-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 of these applies:

- 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.

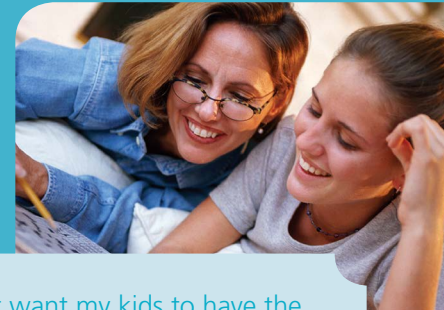
very low sodium

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.

WHAT MOTIVATES ME?



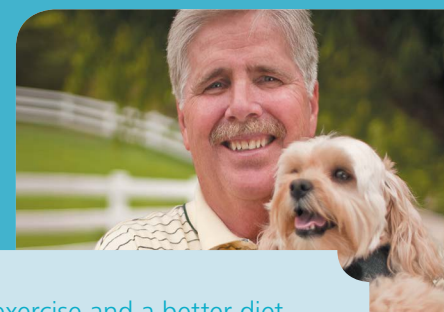
“I don’t want my kids to have the problems I’ve had. I’m making meals that will help all of us be healthier.”

— RAQUEL R.



“I have a new hobby: reading food labels! You have to watch out, or you can get way too much salt and saturated fat. Now that I know what to look for, I’m a pretty smart shopper.”

— SEAN G.



“With exercise and a better diet, my cholesterol has come down a lot. My doctor says I won’t have to take medicine after all.”

— CRAIG F.

To find these and other resources, go to:
intermountainhealthcare.org/heart
intermountainhealthcare.org/nutrition



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This information is not a substitute for professional medical advice, and it should not be used to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. Please consult your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns. More health information is available at intermountainhealthcare.org/heart.

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