

# Eating for a Healthy Heart

*Expertise in Matters of the Heart*

## Better Food Choices Can Lower Your Risk

**Heart Health depends on many things:**

- Food Choices
- Heredity
- Physical Fitness
- Stress
- Smoking
- Healthy Weight

While you cannot change your heredity, many of the factors that can lead to heart disease are related to lifestyle choices. You can make lifestyle changes, such as choosing to eat a more healthy diet, exercise daily, lower daily stress, quit smoking and achieve and maintain a healthy weight to lower your risk of heart disease.

This booklet focuses on ways to help you change your food choices and lower your risk of heart disease.

It is never too late to make changes to your eating habits and lifestyle to promote heart health, even if you have had a heart attack, stroke, or arteriosclerosis. Feasting on heart healthy foods can help prevent heart disease and reduce vessel blockages.

**For a healthy heart, choose to eat:**

Less Fat

Less Fat

Less Sodium

More Fiber



### EAT LESS FAT

Saturated fats and partially or fully hydrogenated fats increase your risk of heart disease. These fats are generally found in animal products—such as meats, butter, cheese and whole milk— and in some packaged foods.

Read the Ingredient List and Nutrition Facts Label of foods at the store and avoid those containing hydrogenated oils, shortenings, palm or coconut oils and more than 5% of the daily allowance of saturated fat.

Aim for less than 30% of your daily calories from fat and less than 7% of your daily calories from saturated fat.

### EAT FEWER CALORIES

When we eat more calories than we need, we gain weight. This weight gain can put increased stress on your heart, cause your blood lipid levels to rise, and lead to heart disease.

By eating fewer calories, we can lose weight. Research has shown that even a 10% weight loss can lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and greatly decrease the

risk of heart disease.

Talk to your healthcare provider and dietitian to create a weight loss plan that fits your needs.

### EAT LESS SODIUM

Eating 2,400 mg or less of sodium per day can help lower some people's blood pressure. This can help reduce your risk of heart disease.

Many of us eat too much sodium each day. Much of that excess sodium comes from packaged foods or the salt we add to foods while cooking or at the table. By reducing the amount of packaged foods you eat and by not adding salt to foods, you can reduce the amount of sodium you consume.

Aim for 2,400 mg of sodium or less per day.

Note: 1 teaspoon of salt contains 2,400 mg of sodium.

### EAT MORE FIBER

Increasing your fiber intake from whole grains, fruits, vegetables and dried beans can lower your risk of heart disease.

The soluble fiber found in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and oats has been shown to help reduce cholesterol levels.

The insoluble fiber found in dried beans, wheat bran, fruits and vegetables can alleviate constipation and may prevent colon cancer.

If you are not currently eating a lot of fiber containing foods, start slowly, adding 1-2 fiber containing foods per day. Aim for 25-35 grams of fiber per day.

# The Skinny on Fats

There are many different types of fat in the foods we eat. Some, such as saturated and hydrogenated fats (A.K.A. trans fats), are harmful to heart health.

Other fats such as monounsaturated (MUFAs), polyunsaturated (PUFAs), and omega-3 fats are beneficial to heart health.

MUFAs, PUFAs, and omega-3 fats have been shown to help reduce cholesterol since, unlike saturated fats, they do not cause cholesterol levels to increase. These fats are also linked to lower levels of inflammation, meaning that they are less likely to form plaques in your arteries than are saturated or trans fats.

MUFAs can be found in oils such as olive, canola and peanut oils, avocado, and nuts such as peanuts, hazelnuts, cashews and almonds.

PUFAs can be found in vegetable oils such as safflower, sunflower, corn or soy oils, nuts (walnuts and brazil nuts), and seeds.

Omega-3 fats are PUFAs found in canola and soy oils, soy products such as tofu and soy milk, flaxseed meal and oil, omega-3 eggs, and oily fish such as Atlantic salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines.

## Tips for Heart Healthy Eating

- Choose foods low in saturated fats, hydrogenated fats, palm and coconut oils.
- Choose to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- Choose to lower your sodium (salt) intake to 2,400 mg or less per day.
- Choose brown rice, whole-wheat pasta and whole-grain cereals and breads, rather than white bread, white rice and cereals made from white (enriched) flour.
- Choose foods high in monounsaturated fats, such as olive oil, canola oil, and seafood.
- Choose foods high in omega-3 fats, such

- Choose foods high in omega-3 fats, such as cold water fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines), flaxseed meal, canola oil, walnuts, omega-3 enriched eggs and soy products.
- Choose low-fat (1% milk fat) or non-fat (skim) dairy products.

### Eat a variety of foods for the best heart health results!

Here's how:

INSTEAD OF . . .	DO THIS. . .
<b>Whole or 2% milk</b>	use 1% or skim milk; fat-free creamer; low-fat or non-fat yogurt, sour cream and cottage cheese.
<b>Fried Foods</b>	eat baked, steamed, boiled, broiled, or microwaved foods.
<b>Cooking with lard, butter, and shortenings</b>	cook with these oils only: canola, olive, grapeseed, safflower, sunflower, soybean
<b>Regular margarine</b>	use reduced fat margarines without trans-fatty acids (Brummel and Brown, Smart Balance, Benecol, Take Control), or small quantities of butter.
<b>Smoked, cured, salted and canned meat, poultry and fish, bacon, lunch meats, sausage and anchovies</b>	eat unsalted fresh or frozen meat, poultry and fish. Also use turkey or chicken lunch meats.
<b>Fatty cuts of meat, such as prime rib, pork or beef ribs, or skin-on poultry</b>	choose lean cuts of meat, such as sirloin or porkloin. Cut the fat off of meats and remove the skin from poultry.
<b>One whole egg in recipes</b>	use two egg whites or the eggs containing omega-3 fats.
<b>Sauces, gravies, butter and salt</b>	flavor your foods with herbs, spices, vinegar, butter-flavored sprays or low-fat, low-sodium bottled marinades and sauces.
<b>Regular hard and processed cheeses, such as parmesan, American cheese and cheese dips</b>	choose low-fat, low-sodium cheeses such as low-fat swiss.
<b>Crackers with salted tops</b>	choose unsalted or low-sodium whole wheat crackers

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INSTEAD OF . . .	DO THIS. . .
White bread, white rice and cereals made with white (enriched) flour	choose whole wheat bread, brown rice, and whole-grain cereals.
Salted potato chips and other snacks	choose low-fat, baked, reduced-sodium tortilla chips, potato chips, and unsalted pretzels and popcorn. Better yet—snack on fruits and vegetables!

Eating this way does not mean you have to spend more money on food. You can still eat many of the same types of foods you eat now, just look for low-fat, low-sodium versions. For example, frozen fruits and vegetables sometimes cost less than fresh and have the same health benefits with a longer shelf life!

## Get familiar with the food label:

The food label can help you make informed, heart healthy food choices. By reading the Ingredient List, Nutrition Facts Label and any Health Claims on the front of the package, you can decide if that food belongs in your heart healthy lifestyle.

Look for certain words on food labels.

The FDA has set rules on how these words can be used. So, if the label says “low-fat,” that food must be low in fat.

### SOME CLAIMS TO LOOK FOR:

Fat-free	Healthy	Reduced calorie
Saturated fat-free	Sodium-free	Light
Low-fat	Low-sodium	High-fiber
Reduced fat	Salt-free	More fiber
Less fat	Reduced sodium	Added fiber
Lean	Lightly salted	
Extra lean	Low-calorie	

## Read the Nutrition Facts Label

Look at the side or back of the package. Here you will find “Nutrition Facts.”

As of January 1, 2006, food manufacturers are required to list the amount of trans fats in the foods they make. Trans fats are the same as hydrogenated fats. It is important to avoid trans fats as they can raise the risk of developing heart disease or make existing heart disease worse.

Look for:  
Serving Size

Total Fat  
Saturated Fat  
Cholesterol  
Sodium

Trans Fat

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (245 g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 125	Calories from Fat 41
<hr/>	
	% Daily Value *
Total Fat 5g	7%
Saturated Fat 3g**	15%
Cholesterol 20mg	7%
Sodium 127mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 12g	4%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 12g	4%
Protein 9g	
<hr/>	
Vitamin A 10%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 31%	Iron 1%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	
** Includes 2g Trans Fats	

Remember that the numbers you see on the Nutrition Facts Label are related to one serving of the food in the package, not the whole package.

## Other things you can do to keep your heart healthy:

Ask your doctor to check your cholesterol regularly. The target cholesterol panel levels vary according to the individual. Ask your doctor what levels are appropriate for you. Keep track of your numbers and see how you progress with your dietary and lifestyle changes!

Regular exercise can help raise your HDL, lower your LDL, help you lose weight and decrease your risk of heart disease. Activities like walking, swimming, biking, or gardening for at least 30 minutes each day are considered to be heart healthy exercises.

Be sure to check with your health care provider before beginning an exercise program.

### EATING FOR A HEALTHY HEART:

You can lower your risk of heart disease by choosing heart healthy foods.

#### Remember:

- Eat less saturated fat.
- Avoid trans fats.
- Choose foods high in omega-3 fats.
- Eat less sodium.
- Reduce your calories if you are overweight.
- Eat more fiber.
- Eat a variety of foods.
- Eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables everyday.
- Choose whole grain breads, pastas and rice.
- If you drink beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

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**ABOUT CAFFEINE**

Some people who occasionally drink caffeinated beverages may find that caffeine intake can cause their blood pressure to rise. This does not affect everyone, but limiting your caffeine intake to one or two caffeinated beverages per day or less may help you sleep better and decrease your stress levels. Good sleep patterns and low stress levels have been shown to decrease blood pressure and the risk of heart disease.

**Additional information about heart healthy eating and other lifestyle changes to improve heart health can be found at:**

**www.americanheart.org or 1-800-242-8721**  
American Heart Association

**www.eatright.org or 1-800-366-1655**  
American Dietetic Association

**www.diabetes.org or 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)**  
American Diabetes Association

**www.MyPyramid.gov**  
The USDA's New Food Guide Pyramid

**http://co.quitnet.com 1-800-639-QUIT**  
Colorado's free Quitline to help smokers quit smoking

**www.calorieking.com**  
Calorie King - Fat and Carbohydrate content of 1,000's of foods including restaurant foods

**www.cookinglight.com**  
Cooking Light Magazine - 1,000's of low-fat recipes that taste great!

**www.eatingwell.com**  
Eating Well Magazine - 100's of low-fat recipes that taste great and health information articles

**Use this chart to keep track of your heart health progress at each doctor visit:**

	Visit 1 Date_____	Visit 2 Date_____	Visit 3 Date_____	Visit 4 Date_____	Visit 5 Date_____	Visit 6 Date_____	Visit 7 Date_____	Visit 8 Date_____
<b>Total Cholesterol</b>								
<b>HDL Cholesterol</b>								
<b>LDL Cholesterol</b>								
<b>Triglycerides</b>								
<b>Blood Pressure</b>								
<b>Weight</b>								



For more information call (970) 221-1000, (800) 459-4241, or visit [www.heartcenteroftherockies.com](http://www.heartcenteroftherockies.com)