



Heart-Healthy Diet Strategies for feeding your heart-Well!

Developing a Heart Healthy Eating Strategy

A heart-healthy diet begins by paying attention to what you eat-and don't eat!

You can reduce your chance of developing atherosclerosis, (the blocked arteries that cause heart disease), or if you already have it, you can slow the rate at which it progresses. You may be able to reduce or even eliminate some of your risk factors.

Adopting a heart-healthy eating strategy can help reduce your total cholesterol as well as the LDL, "lousy" levels, lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, and reduce body weight.

Most diets don't work, because they concentrate on what NOT to eat. Successful healthy nutrition depends on what you CAN eat. In fact, heart disease research tells us that ADDING heart-saving foods is just as important as eliminating others!

Use these guidelines to reduce your heart disease risk:

1. **Eat more fish.** Fish is high in protein. It also contains omega-3 fatty acids, which are anti-inflammatory, so they reduce the risk of stroke and heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends 2 servings a week of omega-3 acid rich fish, such as salmon or other cold water fish.
2. **Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans.** This may be the most powerful (and delicious!) strategy in preventing heart disease.
3. **Choose fat calories wisely.**
 - a. Limit total fat grams.
 - b. Eat a bare minimum of saturated fats and trans fats (butter, lard, hard margarine, salad dressing, fried foods, packaged snack foods, candy, and desserts)
 - c. When you add fat, use fats high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats (for example, canola, olive, and peanut oil)
4. **Eat a variety of high quality protein.** Choose lean meat, fish and vegetable sources such as tofu.
5. **Limit cholesterol.** When it comes to lowering blood cholesterol levels, limiting saturated fats is more important than dietary cholesterol intake. The American Heart Association says it is OK to have one egg a day if your cholesterol is normal. Their recommendation

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is not to exceed 300 milligrams of cholesterol daily.

6. **Reduce salt intake.** The American Heart Association recommends 2,300 milligrams daily (about a teaspoon) of sodium for a healthy adult. Read labels of canned foods, processed foods and condiments; you will be surprised at their sodium content!
7. **Exercise.** The human body is made to be in motion. Exercise strengthens the heart muscle, improves blood flow, reduces high blood pressure, raises HDL (healthy) cholesterol, and helps control blood sugar and body weight.
8. **Drink water.** You will feel better, and have more energy, if you are adequately hydrated.
9. **Eat with mindfulness.** Enjoy every bite. Choose only to eat delicious, healthy food.

What is a Serving?

When you are trying to follow a healthy eating plan, it may help to know how much of a certain food is considered a serving.

SERVING SIZES:

FOOD	SERVING	THE SIZE OF
½ cup cooked rice or pasta	1 starch	tennis ball
1 slice bread	1 starch	compact disc case
1 cup raw vegetables or fruit	1 fruit or vegetable	baseball
½ cup cooked vegetables or fruit	1 fruit or vegetable	fist
1 ounce cheese	1 high-fat protein	pair of dice
1 teaspoon olive oil	1 fat	half dollar
3 ounces cooked meat	3 protein	deck of cards
3 ounces tofu	1 protein	deck of cards

Remember to count fat servings that may be added to food while cooking, such as, oil, butter, or shortening.



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