

Heart-Healthy Eating

The typical American diet is high in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium (salt). This type of diet can increase your blood cholesterol levels and risk for heart disease.

Research shows that reducing the total fat, cholesterol, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium in your diet helps to lower your cholesterol levels and heart disease risk.

In addition, regular exercise may also help lower your cholesterol levels and heart disease risk.

About Fats

To choose heart-healthy foods, you need to know about the different kinds of fats.

Saturated Fats	Trans Fats
<p>Saturated fats can raise blood cholesterol levels. These are found in a variety of foods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fatty cuts of red meatHigh-fat luncheon meatsFried foodsPoultry skinWhole milk, 2 percent milkEggsButterCocoa butterCoconutPalm and coconut oils	<p>Trans fats can raise blood cholesterol levels. Trans fats occur when liquid oils are made into solids. This is called hydrogenation (hi-draw-jen-A-shun). Trans fats are found in a variety of foods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fried foodsStick margarineStore-bought baked goodsStore-bought snacks, such as potato chips
Cholesterol	Mono- and Poly-unsaturated Fats
<p>Cholesterol in the foods you eat can raise your blood cholesterol levels. Cholesterol is found in all animal foods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Red meatPoultryMilkEggs	<p>Unsaturated fats can help lower your blood cholesterol levels if you use them instead of saturated fats. Use fats that are mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated. Good sources of these fats include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Canola oilCorn oilOlive oilPeanut oilSafflower oilSunflower oil

Tips to Lower Fats

Read food labels

- Look for these words on food labels:

- Low fat
- Fat free
- Low cholesterol
- Cholesterol free
- Saturated fat free
- Use products with 3 grams or less of total fat per serving.
- Eat less than 300 mg (milligrams) of cholesterol each day.
- Eat foods with 2 g (grams) or less of saturated fat per serving.

Choose these foods

- Grilled, baked, roasted, steamed, broiled, blackened, or poached foods
- Fat-free or 1 percent fat milk products
- Lean cuts of meat and poultry without skin
- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables
- Rice, pasta, potato, wheat, and barley products
- Whole-grain or whole-wheat breads, pita bread, and bagels
- Foods with high levels of “soluble” fiber (dried beans, peas, oatmeal, nuts, seeds)

Avoid these foods

- Fried, deep fried, battered, buttered, and sautéed foods
- Gravies and sauces
- Donuts, pastries, pies, cakes, and cookies

Sodium Facts

Sodium is a mineral found in many foods and medicines. It is most commonly known as salt. In the body, sodium helps regulate blood pressure and body fluids. Most Americans consume more than 5,000 mg (milligrams) of sodium daily. A healthy diet limits sodium to less than 2,300 mg (milligrams) daily.

Tips to lower sodium

- Read food labels. Look for these words:
- Low sodium
- Sodium free
- Salt free
- Do not add salt at the table or in cooking. This includes sea salt, kosher salt, and salt seasonings, such as onion salt and garlic salt.
- Use herbs and spices to flavor foods. Make sure spices have no added salt.
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables. Avoid canned items, which have more salt.
- Select fresh meats and poultry.

Avoid these foods

- Canned, dehydrated, or restaurant made soups
- Frozen dinners
- Fast foods
- Hot dogs
- Sausage
- Lunch meats
- Bacon
- Cheese spreads
- Olives
- Pickles
- Many snack foods, such as chips and salted nuts
- Bouillon cubes

- Canned vegetables
- Regular canned tomato products and sauces
- Tomato and vegetable juices
- Ketchup
- Soy sauce

Heart Healthy Diet Guidelines

Protein	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
<p>Includes red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, and beans</p> <p>No more than 6 ounces daily 3 ounces of cooked meat is about the size of a deck of cards</p>	<p>Fresh lean pork, veal, beef, and lamb (cuts: round, chuck, sirloin, loin)</p> <p>Poultry without skin not fried</p> <p>Beans and legumes</p> <p>Rabbit, venison, pheasant</p> <p>Reduced-fat or natural peanut butter</p> <p>Fish or shellfish</p> <p>Tofu</p> <p>Egg whites (2=1 whole egg)</p> <p>Cholesterol-free egg substitute</p>	<p>Regular ground beef, highly marbled meat, prime rib, square ribs, organ meats (liver)</p> <p>Poultry with skin or fried</p> <p>Fried fish or shellfish</p> <p>Lunch meats less than 95 percent fat-free</p> <p>Spam, pickle loaf, bacon, sausage, knockwurst, salami, chipped ham, hot sausage</p> <p>Egg yolks (no more than 3 weekly including those used in cooking and baking)</p>

Milk and Dairy Products	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
<p>Includes cheese and yogurt</p> <p>2-3 servings daily</p>	<p>Skim, non-fat, 1/2 percent, and 1 percent milk</p> <p>Yogurt (non-fat or low fat)</p> <p>Soy or rice beverage (non-fat or low-fat)</p> <p>Low-fat and low-sodium cheese (no more than 3 grams of fat per serving)</p> <p>1 percent or 2 percent cottage cheese</p> <p>Ricotta cheese</p> <p>Frozen dairy dessert (low-fat, or non-fat ice cream, frozen yogurt, ice milk, sherbet, frozen fruit bars, Popsicles)</p>	<p>Whole milk, 2 percent milk, buttermilk</p> <p>Whole milk yogurt or yogurt beverages</p> <p>Regular cheeses, cream cheese, Neufchatel, processed cheese</p> <p>4 percent cottage cheese</p> <p>Regular ice cream</p>

Fats and Oils	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
<p>Less than 5 to 8 teaspoons daily</p>	<p>Canola, olive, safflower, sunflower, corn, soybean, and peanut oil</p> <p>Tub margarine made from the above oils and containing no trans fat, non-fat, or low-fat margarine</p> <p>Salad dressing made with the above oils</p> <p>Non-fat or low-fat salad dressing</p> <p>Unsalted seeds or nuts in moderation</p>	<p>Cream, half and half, whipping cream, non-dairy creamers made with coconut or palm oil, dairy whipped topping, sour cream</p> <p>Coconut, palm, or palm kernel oil</p> <p>Butter, lard, shortening, bacon fat, stick margarine</p> <p>Dressings made with egg yolk, cheese, sour cream, cream, or whole milk</p> <p>Coconut</p>

Breads, cereals, grains	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
6 to 11 servings daily	Whole grain breads, English muffins, bagels, buns, low-fat tortillas Cooked or cold cereals, low-fat granola Pasta Rice Low-fat crackers, low-fat animal crackers, unsalted soda crackers, bread sticks, melba toast Low-fat quick breads, cornbread, pancakes, waffles, and muffins	Breads or bread products made with significant amounts of egg, fat, butter, or other saturated fats Croissants Instant hot cereals High-fat snack crackers and crackers with salted tops Commercially baked pastries, pies, cakes, biscuits Doughnuts

Soups	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
	Homemade with low-fat and no-added salt broth Low-fat and reduced-sodium soups	Most commercially prepared or dehydrated soup mixes Canned soups Bouillon cubes

Vegetables	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
3 to 6 servings	Fresh or frozen without added fat or sauces No-added-salt canned vegetables Reduced-sodium or "lite" vegetable juices	Vegetables fried or prepared with butter, cheese, or cream sauces Sauerkraut, pickles, olives Regular canned vegetables or regular vegetable juices

Fruits	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
4 to 6 servings daily	Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned without added salt Fresh, frozen, or canned juices	Fried fruit or fruit served with butter, cream cheese, or other fats Avocados Coconut

Condiments	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
	Spices and herbs Lemon and lime juice Mrs. Dash Mustard Pepper Jelly or jam Low-sodium ketchup	Salt Sea salt Kosher salt Soy sauce Worcestershire sauce Salt seasonings Relish

Vinegar

Bouillon cubes
Poultry seasonings
MSG
Meat tenderizer
Cocktail sauce
Hot sauce
Steak sauce
Teriyaki sauce
Cooking wine or sherry

Sample Heart-Healthy Diet

Breakfast

1/2 cup orange juice
1 cup whole grain cereal
1 small banana
1/4 cup egg substitute
1 whole-wheat toast
1 tablespoon "lite" margarine
1 cup fat-free milk
1 cup coffee or tea

Lunch

1 cup reduced-sodium, fat-free soup
6 unsalted crackers
3 ounces very lean beef patty
1 bun
Mustard
Lettuce and tomato
1 cup fresh fruit salad
8 animal crackers
16 ounces flavored water

Dinner

1 cup tossed salad
2 tablespoons oil and vinegar for dressing
3 ounces baked chicken breast (no skin)
2/3 cup herbed brown rice
1 cup steamed broccoli
Whole grain roll
1 tablespoon "lite" margarine
6 ounces low-fat yogurt
1 sliced apple
16 ounces flavored water