



heartcaring[®]
Hospitals & Physician Practices

HEART HEALTHY NUTRITION

A healthy diet for your heart does not have to be complicated or difficult. It may seem that changing or enhancing your diet is too overwhelming to think about or to do, but follow these tips and you will be eating healthier before you know it.

Finish your vegetables

Vegetables are high in soluble fiber and contain many vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which are great for your heart and entire body. Try to have five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day, especially those that are dark green, orange, red, blue, and yellow.

Go crazy for grains

Whole grains contain soluble fiber, which can help lower cholesterol. The food pyramid suggests six servings of whole-grain products a day. Foods such as cereal, 100% whole-grain bread, and oatmeal are wonderful ways to get your grain.

Skip the bubbly – unless it's sparkling water

Limit the amount of alcohol you drink to no more than one drink per day for women; two drinks per day for men. Excess consumption of alcoholic beverages can increase your risk for developing high blood pressure and other health related problems. Discuss with your physician how much alcohol is appropriate for your situation.

Please DON'T pass the salt

A diet high in salt causes you to retain fluid, which in turn can increase your blood pressure. Be aware of how much salt you eat on a daily basis. Foods often contain “hidden salts”: processed meats – bacon, sausage, hot dogs and luncheon meats; canned soups; and tomato juice. Limit your sodium intake to less than one teaspoon of table salt per day and be sure to read the labels on all products you buy for the sodium content.

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Fish anyone?

The average American diet includes too little fish. The American Heart Association recommends that we eat fish at least twice a week. Fatty fish is best - salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines - because they contain powerful antioxidants, known as omega-3 fatty acids, which help to lower cholesterol levels.

Too much of a sweet tooth

Baked goods such as cookies, muffins, pastries and other foods like candy or soda provide too much of a good thing. A diet high in simple sugars can increase triglyceride levels, cause weight gain and dental cavities. Look for baked goods or snacks that are lower in sugar – or, better yet, make your own and control the amount of sugar you add to the recipe.

Check the label and cut the fat

Choose foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. The body needs some fat to produce essential fatty acids and absorb fat soluble vitamins. It is recommended that no more than 30% of your daily calories come from fat. Be careful with saturated fat – limit this type of fat to 7% of your total fat intake. Calcium is important, so don't cut dairy products, but look for low or fat-free dairy products. Limit your intake of saturated fat by reducing your consumption of red meat, cheese, cold cuts, butter, palm and coconut oils and replace with polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as canola and olive oils, olives, peanuts, peanut butter, avocados and almonds. You should also limit your consumption of trans fatty acids, which are found in foods that contain partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Many convenience foods, such as crackers, cookies and pastries contain trans fatty acids, as well as other baked goods and fried foods.



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