

Guidelines for a Healthy Heart

Follow a Mediterranean Eating Pattern

The Mediterranean eating pattern is associated with improved lipid levels and health. The foundation of this eating pattern is plant based – including plenty of vegetables, whole fruit, beans/legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, olive oil and seafood, a moderate amount of low fat dairy, poultry and eggs, and minimal amounts of red meat and sweets and added sugars.



Pick the Right Type of Fats

- Eat Mostly Unsaturated Fats
 - Omega-3 fats
 - Found in seafood, such as salmon, lake trout, albacore tuna and sardines. Eat 8-ounces of seafood every week.
 - Found in plant sources, such as flaxseed, hemp, and chia, walnuts, fortified nut butters. Eat at least one serving every day.
 - Olive oil, avocado oil, canola oil, avocado, olives. Aim for 3 teaspoons every day.
 - Plant sterol/stanol spreads, such as Benecol help to lower cholesterol and can be used instead of butter or margarine. Use serving listed on the label.
- Eat Less Saturated Fat and Stay Away from Trans Fats
 - Limit saturated fats found in full fat dairy products (cheese, ice cream, whole milk, cream, half & half, cream cheese, sour cream, creamy salad dressings, red meat, fatty and processed meats (sausage, hot dogs, pepperoni, salami, etc.), tropical oils (palm, coconut and palm kernel oils). Use the Nutrition Facts panel to choose foods with % Daily Value of 5% or less.
 - Avoid trans fats from foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- Cholesterol in foods (such as in egg and shellfish) does not appear to increase your blood cholesterol level when eaten in moderate amounts.

Eat More Soluble Fiber

Foods rich in soluble fiber naturally lower cholesterol levels. Aim for 25-30 grams of dietary fiber each day with attention to food sources rich in soluble fiber, such as oatmeal, ready to eat unsweetened oat cereal, barley, beans/legumes, peas, lentils, whole fruits, vegetables, and flaxseed. Choose whole grain instead of refined grains. Here are some examples of soluble fiber superstars:

- All types of beans - black beans, navy beans, kidney beans, etc.
- Ground Flaxseed and Oats– steel cut or whole oats are best because they are less processed than quick or instant oatmeal, unsweetened ready-to-eat oat cereal.
- Whole oranges, as well as apples and pears with the skin
- Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, and asparagus

Stay Clear of Added Sugars

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 10g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 8g	
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.

Limit added sugar and sugar-sweetened beverages to no more than 10% of total calories...that equals about 40-50 grams of added sugar.

Beware of hidden sources of sugars found in foods, such as:

- yogurt
- coffee drinks and ice tea
- energy drinks
- fruit drinks, such as lemonade
- smoothies
- snack foods
- granola and cereal bars
- breakfast cereals
- low fat desserts
- condiments, such as ketchup and BBQ sauce

When in doubt, check the Nutrition Facts for added sugars!

Exercise Every Day!

Aim for 60 minutes each day of moderate to vigorous exercise.

Keep Your Weight and BMI Healthy

Achieve a Body Mass Index (BMI) in a healthy range. Learn your daily goal number of servings and the serving sizes of foods within each food group to assure good portion control. Make half your plate vegetables, including a variety of colors.

- 5-6 servings whole grains – include ½ cup oats or barley or 1 cup ready to eat oat cereal each day
- 2 ½ cups vegetables
- 1 ½ cups whole fruit
- 2 cups low fat dairy – If cheese is consumed, limit to no more than 1 ounce
- 6 ounces lean protein – try to include at least ½ cup beans/legumes and one small handful of walnuts each day, as well as a total of 8 ounces of fish weekly
- 3 teaspoons of healthy fats, such as olive, avocado or canola oils, avocado, and olives
- No more than 40-50 grams of added sugar – read the Nutrition Facts panel to find the added sugar in foods and beverages