

Heart-Healthy Diet



Avoid saturated and trans fats

- *Saturated fats* are mainly from animals and animal products (e.g. dairy products), except coconut and palm kernel oils
- *Trans fats* are fats that are altered to make them more shelf-stable. They act the same as saturated fats in regard to increasing heart disease risk.
 - Found in processed, baked products (cupcakes, cookies, etc) that you would find at the grocery store (a dead giveaway is when the ingredient list states “partially hydrogenated oil”); also, many fast food places use trans fats to cook French fries and other fried foods.

Use monounsaturated oils such as canola, olive or peanut oils. Monounsaturated fats lower your bad cholesterol (LDL), but not your good cholesterol (HDL). Although good for your heart, these “good” fats have as many calories as the “bad ones;” so, to cut calories for weight loss or maintenance, use Teflon pans and/or vegetable oil cooking sprays.

Substitute light spreads with plant substances that lower cholesterol for butter or margarine. These spreads have plant sterols in them which have been shown to significantly lower cholesterol in as little as two weeks, if used everyday (about 2 tablespoons per day). Take Control also has a salad dressing with the same health benefits.

Consume soluble fiber such as oatmeal, dried beans and peas, and fruits. Soluble fiber binds with cholesterol and takes it from your body.

Reduce homocysteine (amino acid linked to heart disease) by eating foods with the B-vitamins folic acid, B₆ and B₁₂.

Raise HDL Cholesterol via *exercise* (aerobic) and *resveratrol* consumption (a substance found in red wine, grapes, grape jellies, grape juice, and in lesser amounts in peanuts, blueberries, cranberries). *Alcohol* in moderation can also raise HDL. Moderation means one drink for women and two for men (sorry ladies, but men usually weigh more, plus have more of an enzyme that allows them to metabolize alcohol more quickly). Alcohol consumption beyond moderation may increase the risk of high blood pressure, high triglycerides, breast and other types of cancer, accidents and liver disease. One drink is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits (eg. whiskey, vodka, gin).

Go to new Food Guide Pyramid at www.mypyramid.gov to see which pyramid is right for you (you can choose from 13 different calorie levels). There is an interactive section where you can input what you have eaten for a day or longer and get feedback about it. You can do the same for physical activity.

To lower triglycerides (fats in the blood that can raise the risk of heart disease) limit concentrated sweets, processed carbohydrates (versus whole grain), and alcohol; eat more foods with omega-3 fatty acids (flaxseed and canola oil; cold-water fish – sardines, cod, mackerel, lake trout, herring, canned light tuna and salmon; green leafy vegetables; soybeans; and nuts).

To lose weight use a small plate at mealtime to make smaller portions look like more. Take only a small amount of food for snacking, especially if you’ll be distracted while eating (e.g. watching TV) – the more you take, the more you’ll probably eat. *Volumetrics* is a weight-control eating plan by which you consume foods that are low in calories but high in bulk (from fiber and water content) and, thus, give you a full feeling from fewer calories. Eat more fruits and vegetables (high in fiber and water) and mix them into casseroles, soups, etc.