

♥ 10 TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HEART ♥

1. Limit fat to 20-30% of total calories (Up to 35% if mostly unsaturated-see #2).

For most men eating 2800 calories per day, that's no more than 60-90 grams of fat per day.

For most women eating 2000 calories per day, that's no more than 45-65 grams of fat.

♥ TIPS:

- Choose very low fat protein-rich foods, such as skinless chicken or turkey breast, fish/shellfish, egg whites, beans, tofu, or other soy-based meat substitutes. Limit high fat red meats (e.g. beef, veal, pork, and lamb).
- If you eat red meat occasionally, choose only the leanest cuts (i.e. round or loin); and keep portion sizes small. One serving of meat is only 3 ounces--the size of a deck of cards or a cassette tape. Most steak houses serve 3-4 times this amount!
- Choose fat-free or 1% low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese, and ice cream.
- Bake, broil, microwave, and steam foods. Avoid frying and sautéing.
- Flavor foods with herbs, garlic, mustard, lemon juice, salsa, tomato sauce, or seasoned vinegars. Limit high fat additions like butter, margarine, mayonnaise, sour cream, and creamy sauces.

2. Limit saturated and trans fat to <7% of total calories. Enjoy small amounts of heart healthy monounsaturated fats instead.

↓ Sources of saturated fat:

Mostly animal fats--butter, cream, red meat (beef, pork, & lamb), chicken skin, and whole fat milk, cheese, and ice cream.

Some plant oils--tropical oils (coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils).

↓ Sources of trans fat: Most margarines, vegetable shortening, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.

↑ Sources of Heart Healthy monounsaturated fat: olive and canola oils, nuts (almonds, peanuts, pistachios, etc.), peanut butter, olives, and avocado.

♥ TIPS:

- Use canola oil in place of other oils/fats when cooking or baking.
- Drizzle olive oil over salads and pasta dishes instead of creamy dressings and sauces.
- Enjoy a handful of your favorite nuts for a heart-healthy snack.
- Spread a thin layer of peanut butter (instead of butter or cream cheese) on bread and bagels.
- Always read food labels! Hydrogenated vegetable oils are hiding in many processed foods.
- Choose a soft tub, "light" margarine that is free of trans fat.
- Choose special margarines and salad dressings made with plant stanols/sterols (like Benecol or Take Control). These products have been shown to help decrease LDL cholesterol levels.

3. Limit cholesterol to no more than 200 mg per day.

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Contrary to what most people believe, dietary cholesterol has only a minor effect on blood cholesterol. Still, it's a good idea to avoid very high sources, like liver, other organ meats, and egg yolks.

♥ **TIP:**

- Try 1/4 cup of egg substitute or 2 egg whites in place of each whole egg in a recipe.

♥ **MORE TIPS:** (for lowering dietary cholesterol)

- Limit egg yolks to no more than 4 per week. Just 1 yolk has 215 mg of cholesterol!
- Shrimp is high in cholesterol, but very low in saturated fat. As long as it's not battered and fried, shrimp is a better alternative to fatty steaks and ribs.

4. Increase dietary fiber, especially soluble fiber.

Aim for a total of 25-40 grams* of fiber every day by eating more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. (*at least 10 g from soluble fiber)

Good sources of soluble fiber: beans, oats and oat bran, barley, fruits, and psyllium

♥ **TIPS:**

- Choose a breakfast cereal with ≥ 5 grams of fiber. Good choices include: 1/2 cup All Bran (10 g fiber), 1/2 cup Grape Nuts (5 g fiber), 2/3 cup Cracklin Oat Bran (6 g fiber), 1 cup Shredded Mini Wheats (6 g fiber), 1 cup Quaker Oat Bran (5 g fiber), 1 1/2 cup Cheerios, Wheaties, or Total (5 g fiber), or 1 1/2 cup bran flakes (10 g fiber).
- Top breakfast cereal with fresh or dried fruit.
- Add frozen vegetables to pasta sauces and rice dishes.
- Choose whole wheat bread, pasta, and cous cous; brown rice; and other whole grains.
- Carry a piece of fruit in your backpack for a heart healthy snack during the day.

5. Choose foods rich in antioxidants (vitamins C & E and beta-carotene).

Good sources of vitamin C: oranges, strawberries, tomatoes, mangoes, bell peppers, potatoes, broccoli

Good sources of beta carotene: carrots, apricots, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, spinach, leafy greens.

Good sources of vitamin E: vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, wheat germ, whole grains

♥ **TIPS:**

- Enjoy 3-4 servings of fruit and 4-6 servings of vegetables every day. One serving of fruit equals 1 small piece of fruit, 6 oz. juice, 1/2 cup canned fruit, or 1/4 cup dried fruit. One serving of vegetable equals 1/2 cup cooked vegetables or 1 cup leafy salad greens. Try to choose at least one that is rich in vitamin C and one that is rich in beta-carotene every day.
- While it's fairly easy to get vitamin C from food alone, some experts now recommend supplementing your healthy diet with 250-500 mg of vitamin C per day.
- High amounts of vitamin E are difficult to get from foods alone, especially when following a low fat diet. Many experts recommend supplementing with 100 to 400 IU of vitamin E daily.
- Beta-carotene supplements are NOT recommended due to questionable evidence of safety and efficacy. It's easy to get plenty of beta-carotene with food alone.

6. Enjoy a fish meal at 2-3 times every week.

The omega 3 fatty acids in fish appear to lower blood triglyceride levels, have a blood-thinning effect, and reduce the risk of sudden cardiac death.

♥ *TIPS:*

- Fatty fish (such as mackerel, salmon, bluefish, tuna, herring, and halibut) have the most omega 3 fatty acids. Broil or poach these fish without added fat, and watch portion sizes.
- Be sure to buy tuna packed in water, not oil. The oil added to canned tuna is not fish oil.
- If you are a vegetarian, enjoy small amounts of walnuts, flaxseeds, and canola oil. These foods are good sources of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a precursor to the omega 3 fatty acids found in fish.

7. Be creative with soy products (tofu, tempeh, soy beans, soy milk, soy nuts, soy flour).

Many soy products contain isoflavones, a group of phytonutrients that may help lower blood cholesterol levels. In addition, soy products are low in saturated fat, rich in protein, and in some cases, good sources of fiber. Aim for at least 25 grams of soy protein per day.

♥ *TIPS:*

- Substitute silken tofu for mayonnaise or sour cream in salad dressings or dips. Use to make pie fillings, cheesecakes, creamy sauces, or cake icings.
- Use firm tofu or tempeh in place of meat or chicken in a stir fry or fajita dish.
- Try soy crumbles in place of ground meat for tacos, casseroles, and spaghetti sauces.
- Add soy protein powder to cereals or shakes.
- Pour soy milk on your favorite breakfast cereal.
- Replace one-fourth of the total flour in a recipe with soy flour.

8. Get adequate B vitamins.

The B vitamins folate, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12 help lower levels of homocysteine in the blood. High levels of homocysteine have been associated with higher risk of heart disease.

♥ *TIPS:*

- Enjoy more leafy green vegetables and beans for good sources of folate and vitamin B6.
- Choose spinach or dark green Romaine lettuce for sandwiches and salads instead of iceberg lettuce.
- Make a vegetarian dish with beans several times a week (e.g. bean burritos, black beans and rice, lentil soup, large garden salad with garbanzo and kidney beans).
- Choose a fortified breakfast cereal or consider taking a simple multi vitamin and mineral supplement with 100% Daily Value for B vitamins. Keep in mind that more does not necessarily mean better. Avoid mega doses of any vitamin or mineral supplement.

9. Exercise, Exercise, Exercise!!!

No one has time to exercise; you have to make time. Keep in mind that regular physical activity not only keeps your heart healthy, but it also reduces stress, improves sleep, fights depression, boosts self-esteem, and helps control weight. It's well-worth your time!

♥ **TIPS:**

- At a minimum, try to accumulate at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk or bike to school, work, the grocery store, or the movie theaters, etc. whenever possible. If you commute, park further away so you can enjoy a 15-minute brisk walk to and from your car every day.
- For maximum heart benefits, enjoy more intense aerobic activities (like brisk walking, jogging, biking, or swimming) for 20 to 60 minutes 3 to 5 times every week.

10. Don't smoke! And take the time to relax and have fun!



For more information:

American Heart Association (AHA)

www.americanheart.org

NIH, National Cholesterol Education Program

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep/index.htm>

NIH, Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/index.html>

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- Enjoy small amounts of heart-healthy monounsaturated and omega 3 fats instead.

2. Choose special margarines & salad dressings made with plant stanols/sterols (e.g. Benecol or Take Control).

These products have been shown in clinical trials to help decrease LDL cholesterol levels.

3. Limit dietary cholesterol to no more than 200 mg per day.

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4. Enjoy a fish meal 2-3 times every week.

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5. Be creative with soy products (tofu, tempeh, soy beans, soy milk, soy nuts, soy flour).

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7. Get adequate B vitamins.

The B vitamins folate, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12 help lower levels of homocysteine in the blood. High levels of homocysteine have been associated with higher risk of heart disease.

8. Enjoy plenty of brightly colored vegetables & fruits and other phytonutrient-rich plant foods.

Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, and nuts/seeds are rich in antioxidants (vitamins C & E, beta carotene, etc.) and "phytonutrients" (plant chemicals) that may protect the heart.

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