



Keeping a Healthy Heart

Brought to you by Froedtert and Community Memorial Hospital Dietitian



You can control many healthy risk factors that contribute to problems later on. Those factors include your overall eating plan and how actively you live your life. Keeping a healthy heart is a goal we should all try to achieve.

Limit how much saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol you eat.

These fats are usually found in meat and dairy foods and products that are commercially baked and fried. Cutting back on these foods can reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease by lowering "bad" LDL cholesterol in your blood.

Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.

- ♥ Cuts of red meat and pork labeled 'loin' and 'round' usually have the least amount of fat.
- ♥ Remove all visible fat from meat and poultry before cooking.
- ♥ Remove skin from poultry before eating.
- ♥ Choose white meat most often when eating poultry.
- ♥ Grill, bake or broil meats and poultry.
- ♥ Cut back on processed meats that are high in saturated fat and sodium.

Select fat-free, 1 percent fat, and low-fat dairy products.

- ♥ Minimize your intake of whole-fat dairy products such as butter and whole milk or full-fat dairy products (yogurt, cheeses).
- ♥ If you drink whole or 2 percent milk, or use full-fat dairy products, gradually switch to fat-free, low-fat or reduced-fat dairy products.

Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.

- ♥ Use liquid vegetable oils and soft margarines in place of hard margarine or shortening.
- ♥ Limit cakes, cookies, crackers, pastries, pies, muffins, doughnuts and French fries made with partially hydrogenated or saturated fats.

Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol.

- ♥ Try to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- ♥ Some commonly eaten cholesterol-containing foods include eggs (about 200 mg per yolk), shellfish (50 to 100 mg per ½ cup), "organ" meats such as liver (375 mg per 3 oz), and whole milk (30 mg per cup).

Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt.

Foods low in salt lower your risk for high blood pressure and may help you control it.

- ♥ Compare the sodium content of similar products (for example, different brands of tomato sauce) and choose the products with less sodium.
- ♥ Choose frozen foods, soups, cereals, baked goods and other processed foods that are labeled "reduced-sodium."
- ♥ Limit high-sodium condiments and foods such as soy sauce, steak sauce, Worcestershire sauce, flavored seasoning salts, pickles and olives.
- ♥ Replace salt with herbs and spices or some of the salt-free seasoning mixes. Use lemon juice, citrus zest or hot chiles to add flavor.
- ♥ Try rinsing certain foods, such as canned tuna and salmon, feta cheese and capers, to remove some of the sodium.

Eat more fiber.

Oatmeal, oat bran, rice, wheat bran, barley and beans may help lower blood cholesterol levels. That's because these fiber-rich foods may help take cholesterol away before it can be absorbed into your bloodstream. Fruits and vegetables are also good fiber sources and provide essential antioxidant vitamins such as beta-carotene, and vitamins A and C.

Maintain or improve your weight.

The more excess body fat you have, the greater your risk for heart disease. Another point to consider is where our body stores extra fat. Those who carry a spare tire around their middle have a higher cardiac risk than those with extra weight in their hips and thighs.

Keep Moving.

Not only does active living help keep blood cholesterol levels normal, it also reduces blood pressure, helps control your body stress and helps control body weight. More vigorous physical activity gives your heart muscle a good workout and ultimately helps your whole cardiovascular system work more efficiently. Get the heart-healthy benefits of regular physical activity.

If you smoke, quit.

Smoking is a key factor in sudden death from cardiovascular disease. It seems to raise blood pressure levels and heart rate, and may lower HDL-cholesterol (the good cholesterol).

Watch alcohol consumption.

Heavy drinking may increase the risk of high blood pressure. Health experts advise no more than one drink a day for women, and two for men.

Adapted from www.eatright.org and www.americanheart.org

