

Healthy Eating Guidelines

Making The Guidelines Work: Eat the Heart-Healthy Way

Look at how your family eats now and begin to plan. You don't have to cut out all high saturated fat, high cholesterol foods. Just substitute one or two low saturated fat or low cholesterol foods each day, and soon you will reach your goal of heart-healthy eating for you and your family. By making the changes slowly, you are more likely to stick with your new eating plan.

Choose heart-healthy foods from different food groups--meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish; dairy foods; eggs; fruits and vegetables; breads, cereals, pasta, rice and other grains, and dry peas and beans; fats and oils; and sweets and snacks. Choose the number and size of portions to help you reach and stay at your desirable weight. Eating a variety of foods each day will help your whole family get the nutrients you need. Use these tips to choose foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol: Meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish

Buying tips:

- Choose lean cuts of meat. Choose fish and skinless poultry more often; they are generally lower in saturated fat than meat. Eat moderate portions--no more than about 6 ounces a day (a 3-ounce portion is about the size of a deck of cards).
- Look for meats labeled "lean" or "extra lean."
- Limit organ meats like liver, sweetbreads, and kidneys. Organ meats are high in cholesterol, even though they are fairly low in fat.
- Limit high fat processed meats like bacon, bologna, salami, hot dogs, and sausage.
- Remember that some chicken and turkey hot dogs are lower in saturated fat and total fat than pork and beef hot dogs. There are also "lean" beef hot dogs that are low in fat and saturated fat. Usually, processed poultry products have more fat and cholesterol than fresh poultry. To be sure, check the nutrition label on deli products such as hot dogs and luncheon meats to find those that are lowest in fat and saturated fat.
- Try fresh ground turkey or chicken made from white meat, like the breast.
- Limit use of goose and duck. They are higher in saturated fat, even with the skin removed.
- Choose shellfish occasionally. Shellfish has little saturated fat in general, but its cholesterol content varies--some (like squid, shrimp, and oysters) are fairly high while others (like scallops, mussels, and clams) are low.
- Buy canned fish packed in water, not oil.

Preparation tips:

- Trim fat from meat and remove skin from poultry before eating.
- Bake, broil, microwave, poach, or roast instead of frying. When you do fry, use a nonstick pan and nonstick cooking spray or a small amount of vegetable oil to reduce the fat.
- When you roast, place the meat on a rack so the fat can drip away.
- Brown ground meat and drain well before adding other ingredients.
- Use fat free ingredients like fruit juice, wine, or defatted broth to baste meats and poultry.

Dairy Foods

Buying tips:

- Drink skim or 1 percent milk rather than 2 percent and whole milk.
- When looking for hard cheeses, go for versions that are "fat free," "reduced fat," "low fat," "light," or "part-skim." These have less fat per ounce than the regular versions.
- When shopping for soft cheeses, choose low fat (1 percent) or nonfat cottage cheese, farmer cheese, pot cheese, or part-skim or "light" ricotta. These cheeses have less fat per ounce than the whole milk versions.
- Use low fat or nonfat yogurt; try it in recipes or as a topping.
- Try low fat or nonfat sour cream or cream cheese blends for spreads, toppings, or in recipes.

Preparation tips:

- Try low fat cheese in casseroles, or try a sharp-flavored regular cheese and use less than the recipe calls for. Save most of the cheese for the top.
- Use skim, 1 percent, or evaporated skim milk for creamed soups or white sauces.

Eggs

Buying tips:

- Eggs are included in many processed foods and baked goods. Look at the nutrition label to check the cholesterol content.
- Try egg substitutes.

Preparation tips:

- Egg whites have no cholesterol, so try substituting them for whole eggs in recipes; two egg whites are equal to one whole egg. Or, use egg substitutes.

Fruits and Vegetables

Buying tips:

Buy fruits and vegetables often--fresh, frozen, or canned. They have no cholesterol and most are low in saturated fat. Also, most fruits and vegetables, except avocados, coconut, and olives, are low in total fat.

Preparation tips:

Use fruits as a snack or dessert.

Prepare vegetables as snacks, side dishes, and salads. Season with herbs, spices, lemon juice, or fat free or low fat mayonnaise. Limit use of regular mayonnaise, salad dressings, and cream, cheese, or other fatty sauces.

Breads, Cereals, Pasta, Rice and other Grains, and Dry Peas and Beans

Buying tips:

- Use whole-grain breads, rolls, and cereals often.
- Limit baked goods like these that are made with large amounts of fat, especially saturated fat:
 - Croissants
 - Biscuits
 - Doughnuts
 - Butter rolls
 - Muffins
 - Coffee cake
 - Danish pastry

Be aware that some baked goods contain palm, palm kernel, and coconut oils. These oils are high in saturated fats, even though they are vegetable oils.

- Choose ready-to-eat cereals often. Most are low in saturated fat, except for granola, muesli, or oat bran types made with coconut or coconut oil.
- Buy dry peas and beans often. They are low in saturated fat and total fat and high in fiber.

Preparation tips:

- Try pasta or rice in soups, or with low fat sauces as main dishes or casseroles.
- Stretch meat dishes with pasta or vegetables for hearty meals. You can use less meat this way and still have the flavor.
- Bake your own muffins and quick breads using unsaturated vegetable oils; substitute two egg whites for each egg yolk, or use egg substitutes. Experiment with substituting applesauce for oil or cut back the amount of oil in the recipe. For each two cups of flour, you only need 1/4 cup of vegetable oil.
- Use dry peas and beans as the main ingredient in casseroles, soups, or other one-dish meals. They are excellent sources of protein and fiber.

Fats and Oils

Buying tips:

- Choose liquid vegetable oils high in unsaturated fat for cooking and in salad dressings. Examples are canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, soybean, and sunflower oils.
- Buy light or nonfat mayonnaise instead of the regular kinds that are high in fat.

Preparation tips:

- In cooking, limit butter, lard, fatback, and solid vegetable shortenings.
- When using fats and oils, use only small amounts and substitute those high in unsaturated fat for those high in saturated fat.

- For a spread, use tub or liquid margarine, or vegetable oil spread instead of butter.
- Flavor cooked vegetables with herbs or butter-flavored seasoning.

Sweets and Snacks (have one only now and then)

Buying tips:

- Choose these low fat sweets for a special treat:
 - brownies, cakes, cheesecakes, cupcakes, and pastries labeled "fat free" or "low fat." Even though they have less fat, they still may be just as high in calories. If you are trying to lose weight, read the label to compare;
 - animal crackers, devil's food cookies, fig and other fruit bars, ginger snaps, graham crackers, and vanilla or lemon wafers;
 - frozen low fat or nonfat yogurt, fruit ices, ice milk, popsicles, sherbet, and sorbet;
 - gelatin desserts.
- Try these low fat snacks:
 - bagels, bread sticks, melba toast, rice cakes, rye crisp, and soda crackers;
 - unsweetened, ready-to-eat cereals;
 - fresh fruit, fruit leather, or other dried fruit;
 - pretzels, no-oil baked tortilla chips;
 - plain, air-popped popcorn.

Preparation tips:

- Freeze grapes or banana slices for treats.
- Make puddings with skim or 1 percent milk.
- Top angel food cake with fruit puree or fresh fruit slices.
- Cut up raw vegetables and serve with a low fat dip.
- Make air-popped or "light" microwave popcorn.

Read Food Labels

Reading food labels can help you and your family eat the heart-healthy way. Food labels have two important parts: the nutrition label and the ingredients list. Also, some labels have claims like "low fat" or "light."

Look on the nutrition label for the amount of saturated fat, total fat, cholesterol, and total calories in a serving of the product. Use this information to compare similar products and find the ones with the smallest amounts.

If there is no nutrition label, look for the list of ingredients. Here, the ingredient in the greatest amount is shown first and the ingredient in the least amount is shown last. So, to choose foods low in saturated fat or total fat, go easy on products that list fats or oil first--or that list many fat and oil ingredients.

In addition to the nutrition information and ingredients list, some food packages have claims like "low fat," "light," or "fat free."