

## 9 Tips for a Heart-Healthy Diet

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Eating a heart-healthy diet pays big benefits, like better cholesterol and blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and weight.

Take these nuggets of nutrition wisdom to **heart**:

- 1.** Eat more fish. Fish is a good source of protein and other nutrients. Some fish, such as salmon, tuna, and mackerel, also gives you omega-3 fatty acids, which may cut your risk of heart disease and stroke. The American Heart Association recommends two servings a week of fish that are rich in omega-3s.
- 2.** Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and beans. Plant foods are a powerful help in fighting heart disease. You get nutrients, fiber, and almost endless variety that you can cook in many different ways.
- 3.** Avoid artificial trans fats completely. They raise your "bad" (LDL) cholesterol level. Items that may have trans fat include baked goods, snack foods, frozen pizza, fast food, vegetable shortenings, stick margarines, coffee creamer, refrigerated dough products (such as biscuits and cinnamon rolls), and ready-to-use frostings. Even if the label says "0 grams trans fat," they may still have a tiny bit of trans fat, so check the ingredients list on packaged foods for "partially hydrogenated oils." Those are trans fats.
- 4.** Limit saturated fat to no more than 7% to 10% of calories. Check food labels to see how much saturated fat is in a serving of butter, hard margarine, salad dressing, fried foods, snack foods, sweets, and desserts.
- 5.** When you use added fat, use fats high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats (for example, fats found in canola, olive, and peanut oil). You still need to limit how much you use, even with "good" fats, because they are high in calories.
- 6.** Eat a variety of protein foods. Favor fish, lean cuts of meat, poultry, beans, nuts, tofu, and legumes.
- 7.** Cut back on salt. This will help control your blood pressure. Most people get too much sodium, and a lot of it comes from packaged foods.
- 8.** Enjoy every bite! When you enjoy what you eat, it's easier to keep eating that way.