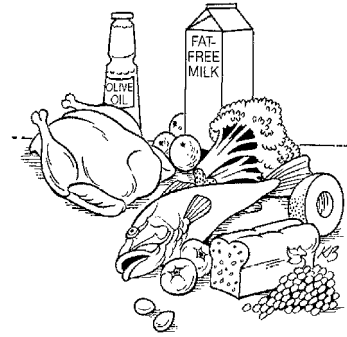


How Do I Follow a Healthy Diet?

Healthy food habits can help you reduce three risk factors for heart attack and stroke — high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight.

Here are the basic food groups with the number of servings we recommend. Be sure to choose a variety of foods from each group.



Breads, cereals, pasta and starchy vegetables (6 or more servings per day)

- One serving equals 1 slice bread; ½ cup hot cereal, 1 cup flaked cereal; ½ cup cooked rice or pasta; or ¼ to ½ cup starchy vegetables, like beans, corn or potatoes.
- Include whole-grain products like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain crackers and brown rice, as much as possible.
- Many crackers and snacks are now available in low-fat and low-salt varieties.

Vegetables and fruits (8 to 10 servings per day)

- One serving equals a medium-size piece of fruit, ½ cup fruit juice, or ½ to 1 cup cooked or raw vegetables.
- Fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber, and low in fat and calories.

Lean meat, poultry, fish and beans (no more than 6 cooked ounces per day)

- A 3 oz. portion is about the size of a deck of playing cards, ½ of a chicken breast or ¾ cup of flaked fish.
- Enjoy at least two servings of baked or grilled fish each week.
- Trim fat from meats; remove skin from poultry.
- ½ cup of cooked beans, peas or lentils equals a 1 oz. serving of meat, poultry or fish. A ½ cup of tofu or one egg equals 1 oz. of meat.

Fat-free and low-fat milk products (2 to 3 servings per day)

- One serving equals 1 cup milk or yogurt or 1½ oz. fat-free or low-fat cheese.
- Use only milk products with 0% to 1% fat. 2% milk is not low-fat.
- Have only fat-free or low-fat yogurt.
- Use dry-curd, fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese.
- Cheeses should have no more than 3 grams of fat per oz. and no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per oz.

Fats and oils (2 to 3 servings per day)

- One serving equals 1 tsp. vegetable oil or soft margarine, 2 tsp. diet margarine, 1 Tbsp. regular salad dressing, 1 Tbsp. regular mayonnaise or 2 Tbsp. peanut butter.
- One serving equals 2 Tbsp. seeds or $\frac{1}{3}$ cup nuts, $\frac{1}{8}$ medium-size avocado, 10 small or 5 large olives.
- Choose fats and oils with 2 grams or less saturated fat per tablespoon, such as liquid and tub margarines, and canola, corn, safflower, soy bean and olive oils.
- Be sure to count the fats used in store-bought foods, in cooking and on vegetables and breads.
- Read food labels carefully and try to avoid “hydrogenated” oils and fats.

How can I cut down on saturated fat and calories?

- For your main dish, enjoy pasta, rice, beans and/or vegetables. Or mix these foods with small amounts of lean meat, skinless poultry or fish.
- Boil, broil, grill, bake, roast, poach, steam, sauté, stir-fry or microwave. Don’t fry in oil.
- Trim fat from meat and poultry. Drain fat after browning. Chill soups and stews after cooking to remove hard fat from the top.

How can I cut down on dietary cholesterol?

- Foods from animals (such as meat, poultry, egg yolks, butter, cheese and full-fat milk) are high in cholesterol. Eat less of them.
- Eggs and shellfish are high in cholesterol but low in saturated fat and total fat.

Here are some tips about using eggs in your diet:

- One large, whole egg has about 213 mg of cholesterol. This is about 71% of the daily limit (less than 300 mg). Extra-large and jumbo eggs have even more.
- Use two egg whites, or one egg white plus 2 teaspoons of unsaturated oil, in place of one whole egg in cooking. You can also use egg substitutes.
- If you eat a whole egg, try to avoid or limit other sources of cholesterol on that day

How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It’s very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit americanheart.org to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at StrokeAssociation.org.

We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.

Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your doctor. For example:

What can I eat at fast-food restaurants? _____

How can I control the portions? _____

Your contribution to the American Heart Association supports research that helps make publications like this possible.

The statistics in this sheet were up to date at publication. For the latest statistics, see the *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update* at americanheart.org/statistics.

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