

Heart Healthy Eating

Healthy diet habits may lower your risk of heart attacks and stroke. The type of fat in the diet is more important than the amount you eat. If you have congestive heart failure or high blood pressure, then it is a good idea to lower your salt intake too.

Choose healthier fat:

Monounsaturated Fats:	Polyunsaturated Fats/Omega-3 Fats:	Polyunsaturated Fats:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olive oil, canola oil, peanut oils • Tub margarines • Avocados, nuts (almonds, peanut, pecans, pistachios, hazelnut) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish (albacore tuna, salmon, trout, mackerel, white fish, catfish, halibut, cod) • Fish oil (ask your doctor about a fish oil supplement) • Flax seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil, sesame oil, soybean oil

Avoid saturated fat and trans fat:

- Fatty meat (beef, pork, lamb), skin of poultry
- Lard
- Whole milk, 2% milk, cream and butter
- Fatty cheeses
- Palm kernel oil and palm oil
- Coconut oil
- Cocoa butter

Trans Fats:

- These fats are made during a process called hydrogenation. Trans fats are known to raise LDL-cholesterol and increase your risk of heart disease. Read labels for “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” fats on the ingredient list and avoid these types of foods. Examples of food products that may have trans fats:
- Baked goods (crackers, cookies, cakes, donuts)
- Margarine (softer margarines are less likely to contain trans fat)
- Muffins and sweet breakfast breads
- Commercial prepared fried or breaded foods

Choose healthier carbohydrates:

- Whole grains
- dried beans and peas
- fruits
- vegetables
- nuts and seeds

Benefits of fiber

- Eating fiber containing plant foods helps to lower blood cholesterol, blood sugars, body weight and avoid constipation.

Avoid refined carbohydrates

Moderate your use or minimize intake of:

- Added table sugar
- Corn syrup
- Sugary syrups
- Confectioner’s sugar
- White flour and white flour products
- High fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Brown sugar
- Other natural sweeteners
- White rice and other refined grains

Limit salt

Almost all foods naturally contain some sodium. Food becomes higher in sodium due to the addition of salt or a sodium preservative. Eating high amounts of salt may increase blood volume and raise blood pressure. This makes the heart work harder. Reducing the amount of sodium in your diet may help to reduce blood pressure. In addition, eating less salt prevents fluid retention in the abdomen, legs and arms.

Ways to add flavor without salt:

- Use herbs, spices and spice blends in place of salt
- Vinegar (dark balsamic, white balsamic and flavored vinegars)
- Lemon or lime juice, grated rind, dried lemon or citric acid
- Purees of bell peppers
- Cooking wine, wine vinegar
- Pungent vegetables, especially roasted types
- Flavored oils (garlic oil, basil oil, cilantro oil, parsley oil - homemade)
- Low sodium condiments (yellow mustard, low sodium ketchup)
- Vinegar and oil dressings (low sodium preferred)

High sodium foods to avoid:

- Cured meats (sausage, bacon, lunch meats, hot dogs)
- Foods in a brine (sauerkraut, pickles, canned vegetables, most canned foods)
- Salted foods (pretzels, nuts, potato chips, tortilla chips, bagels, English muffins)
- Processed cheese
- Restaurant foods (fast food, sauces, salad dressings, pre-seasoned meats)
- Frozen meals (more than 600 milligrams of sodium per meal)
- Seasoning blends with salt (garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt, Brand Name seasoning salts)
- Regular condiments, sauces and dressings

Why should I avoid salt?

- Table salt is a crystal containing the minerals sodium and chloride.
- 1 teaspoon of salt = 2000-2300 milligrams sodium.

Tips for reading food labels

- Look for foods with no more than 1 gram (g) saturated fat per serving. This is the definition of a Low Saturated Fat food.
- Choose foods that have 0 g Trans Fat.
- Eat foods that have no more than 200-300 milligrams (mg) sodium per serving.
- To reduce fluid retention, choose foods that have 140 mg sodium per serving. This is the definition of a Low Sodium food.
- Foods with 2.5 g Fiber or more per serving are a good source of fiber. While foods with 5 g Fiber or more per serving are an excellent source of fiber.

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size: 2 crackers (14 g)		
Servings Per Container: About 21		
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Amount Per Serving		
Calories: 60 Calories from Fat 15		
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		% Daily Value
Total Fat	1.5 g	2%
Saturated Fat	0 g	0%
Trans Fat	0 g	
Cholesterol	0 mg	
Sodium	70 mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate	10 g	3%
Dietary Fiber	less than 1 g	3%
Sugars	0g	
Protein	2g	
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Ingredients: wheat flour, water, salt.		

About this food label example

According to the food labeling tips, this example shows a food that is:

- Low in saturated fat
- Contains no trans fat
- Low in sodium
- Low in fiber

Tips to start eating healthier:

- Change to Skim milk or 1% milk.
- Choose low fat cheese and low fat yogurt.
- Eat more plant-based foods.
- Eat balanced meals, choose a variety of foods from all food groups and eat in moderation.
- Cook with more heart healthy oils, instead of butter.
- If margarines are used, choose one without trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oil.
- Bake, broil, steam, stir-fry or poach.
- Eat more fin-fish. If you dislike the taste of fish, then ask your doctor about taking fish oil capsules.
- Choose lean cuts of meat.
- Enjoy more meatless main dishes 1-2 times per week. For example, use dried beans, split peas, lentils, soy and meat substitutes in place of meat in dishes.
- Substitute frozen yogurt, sorbet or ice milk, as a dessert, in place of ice cream.
- When you eat at restaurants, try eating half your meal and package the other half for home at a later time.
- Ask to have your food prepared without salt.
- Ask for sauces, dressings and gravies on the side. Drizzle and use only a small portion.
- Ask for sandwiches with lower sodium cheese, for example, Swiss cheese.

Exercise

- Exercise for 30 to 60 minutes, on most days of the week. Be sure to consult your doctor before you start an exercise program.

Benefit of exercise

- Reduces the risk of heart disease by improving blood circulation
- Weight control
- Improves blood cholesterol levels
- Improves blood pressure
- Increases energy level
- Stress management and tension release

For Additional Information:

- Visit <http://www.heart.org/>

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Reviewed by: Nutrition Education Materials Task Force

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