



# Heart Healthy Eating

Translations available in:

[Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#)

Healthy food habits can help reduce high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and excess body weight. These are three risk factors for heart attack and stroke. The goal of a heart healthy diet is to eat a variety of foods, while limiting saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.

## Cholesterol

Cholesterol is used to form cell membranes and some hormones, as well as for other important body functions. About two-thirds of cholesterol is made in the liver. Its production is stimulated by saturated fat. The remaining one-third of our total cholesterol comes from the food we eat. Excess blood levels of cholesterol can be damaging to your heart. For this reason it is important to limit how much saturated fat and cholesterol you eat.



### **Dietary sources of cholesterol**

- Egg yolks\*
- Organ meats\*
- Shellfish (Lobster, shrimp, crab, etc)
- All other animal products

\*Foods very high in cholesterol



### **LDL cholesterol**

This is your “bad” cholesterol. Too much LDL cholesterol can cause build up in the inner walls of arteries. This leads to narrowing of the arteries and reduced blood flow, a process called atherosclerosis. Blockage of the arteries can cause chest pain and ultimately lead to a heart attack or stroke.

### **HDL cholesterol**

This is your “good” cholesterol. It carries cholesterol away from your arteries and back to the liver, where it can be eliminated from the body. A high HDL level in your blood can lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. An HDL level greater than 60 is considered protective against heart disease.

### **Triglycerides (Trig)**

This is the most common type of fat in your body. A high triglyceride level combined with either low HDL or high LDL cholesterol can speed up atherosclerosis.

<b><u>Your Cholesterol Levels</u></b>	<b><u>Recommended Levels</u></b>
LDL _____	Less than 100 gm/dl
HDL _____	Over 55 mg/dl for women Over 45 mg/dl for men
Total _____	Less than 200 mg/dl
Trig _____	Less than 100 mg/dl

## Types of Fat

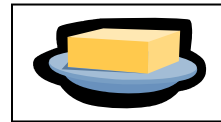
### **Saturated fat:**

Diets high in saturated fat increase LDL and total cholesterol levels. Reducing the amount of saturated fat you eat can help lower your blood levels of LDL cholesterol and total cholesterol.

### **Sources of saturated fat:**

#### Animal products

- Fatty cuts of meat (beef, lamb, pork)
- 
- Poultry with skin
- Whole and 2% milk
- Butter
- Cheese
- Lard



#### Plant sources

- Palm kernel oil
- Palm oil
- Coconut oil
- Cocoa butter



### **Trans fats**

These fats are made during a process called hydrogenation. This process stabilizes polyunsaturated oils to prevent them from spoiling and to keep them solid at room temperature. Trans fats also raise LDL cholesterol and increase your risk for heart disease.

Avoid foods with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats listed on the ingredients list on the food label.

### **To name a few:**

- Baked goods (crackers, cookies, cakes, donuts)
- Hard margarines
- Commercially produced white breads
- French fries



**Monounsaturated fats**

These fats can lower your LDL when used in place of saturated fats in the diet. The majority of the fat you eat should come from these fats.

**Sources of Monounsaturated fats**

- Canola, olive, peanut oils
- Tub margarines
- Olives
- Avocados
- Nuts
- Tree nuts



**Polyunsaturated fats**

These fats also help to lower LDL cholesterol when used in place of saturated fats in the diet. They have been shown to have many positive effects. They can reduce inflammation and blood clotting, and decrease blood pressure and triglyceride levels. But they can also lower your “good” HDL cholesterol. Because of this, no more than 10% of your daily fat intake should come from polyunsaturated fats. The essential fatty acids, Omega-3 and Omega-6, are polyunsaturated fats.

**Sources of Polyunsaturated Fats**

- Safflower, sunflower, corn and cottonseed oils
- Fatty fish and fish oils

**Tips for Reading Food Labels**

Look for foods with no more than 3 gm of total fat and 1 gram (g) saturated per serving

To reduce the sodium in your diet try to choose foods that are no more than 200-300 milligrams (mg)/serving. Note: A low sodium food contains no more than 140 mg/serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 crackers (14 g)	
Servings Per Container About 21	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories 60</b>	Calories from Fat 15
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat 1.5g</b>	<b>2%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol 0mg</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium 70mg</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate 10g</b>	<b>3%</b>
Dietary Fiber Less than 1g	3%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
Calories: 2,000 2,500	
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2400mg 2400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

Pay attention to the serving size. All the information on the label is based on that amount. If you eat 2 servings, you eat twice the values shown on the label.

Try to eat foods that have 0 g Trans Fat

Keep your cholesterol intake to less than 200 mg/day.

## **Salt**

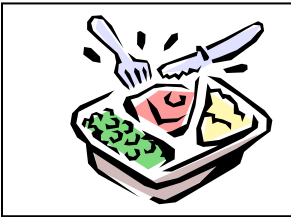
Salt, also known as sodium chloride, is needed for many body functions. Almost all foods naturally contain sodium. Added salt in food preparation and food processing are the major sources of salt in our diet. Healthy adults require only 2400 milligrams sodium per day, yet the average American consumes 6000-8000 mg sodium daily. When we eat a high salt diet, our blood levels of sodium increase. This makes the body pump more water into the blood. The extra blood volume causes the heart to work harder to pump the extra fluid. Reducing the amount of sodium in your diet may help to reduce high blood pressure. In addition, it will decrease fluid overload, which leads to fluid retention in the legs and arms.



Goal – Stop using table salt (1 tsp = 2300 mg salt), limit portion sizes, and how often you eat high sodium foods.

### **High Sodium Foods**

- Cured meats
- Sausages
- Frankfurters
- Luncheon meats
- Canned vegetables, soups, beans, fish
- Salted nuts and seeds
- Soy products
- Commercially prepared main-course meals
- Box dinners (seasoning packets)
- Frozen meals
- Cheeses, especially processed cheese
- Olives, pickles, relish
- Meat tenderizer
- Mayonnaise, salad dressings
- Seasoning salts (garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt)
- Ketchup
- Sauces (barbecue, soy, steak, Worcestershire)



### **Use in Place of Salt**



- Spices such as garlic, oregano, basil, onion, pepper.
- Vinegar
- Lemon juice
- Wine
- Fresh ground horseradish (not spread)
- Use low sodium condiments whenever available such as ketchup, mustard, and salad dressings.

## How to Get Started

- Change to fat-free (skim) milk or 1% milk.
- Use tub margarine (Trans fat-free) instead of butter. Continue to use sparingly.
- Cook with olive or canola oil instead of butter.
- Bake, broil, steam, stir-fry or poach. Do not fry, baste, braise, or sauté. Avoid foods that are au gratin, stuffed or stewed.
- Choose lean cuts of meat.
- Limit portion sizes of meat and poultry to 2-3 ounce servings. Do not include more than 2 servings per day (4-6 ounces total).
- Limit your intake to no more than 3-4 egg yolks per week. This includes yolk used in baked goods and processed foods.
- Limit organ meats to rare occasions and when you do eat it keep the portions small. These are very high in cholesterol.
- Try to substitute meatless main dishes 2-3 times per week. For example, use dried beans, split peas, lentils, soy and meat substitutes in place of meat in dishes.

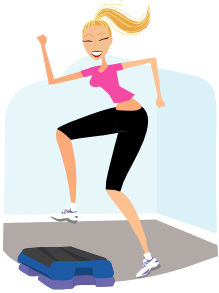


- Choose low fat or fat-free dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, sour cream, milk, cream cheese, etc.
- Use two egg whites or egg substitute in place of 1 full egg in baking and for omelets.
- Use low fat frozen yogurt, sorbets, ice milk, etc as a dessert in place of ice cream.
- Limit eating out as much as possible. When you do eat out use above suggestions and split your meal or package half to take home for another meal.
- Ask to have your food prepared without salt.
- Ask for sauces, dressings, and gravies on the side. Use the dip and stab method. This involves dipping your fork in the sauce and then spearing and eating your food.
- Ask for sandwiches without cheese and condiments. Mayonnaise and other sauces are high in fat.

## Additional Lifestyle Strategies for Heart Healthy Living

### Exercise

It is recommended that you 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

### Diet

Eat a **high fiber** diet. Fiber helps to lower blood cholesterol levels, control blood sugar and aids in weight control.



Increase whole grains, dried beans and peas, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Use **plant sterols**. These reduce cholesterol by impairing absorption in the intestine.

Benecol® and Take Control® are two examples of margarines that contain plant sterols.

Include **Omega-3 Fatty Acids**. They reduce the possibility of blood clots and the risk of irregular heart beat.

#### Fish oils

- Eat two servings (7-8 ounces total) of fish each week
- Supplementation is not recommended for all people. Please consult with your doctor prior to before fish oil capsules.

#### Flax seed

- Add 1 Tbsp.-1/4 cup ground flax seed daily to your yogurt, cereal, or juice.
- Flax contains 2.5 g fat per tablespoon. This should be counted in your total daily fat intake.