

Healthy eating for your heart

What does heart healthy eating mean to me?

Heart healthy eating is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Heart healthy eating, along with regular physical activity and choosing to be smoke-free can help you to:

- improve your blood fats
- achieve and maintain a healthy body weight
- reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke

This handout will help you choose heart healthy foods to include as part of a healthy diet.

Why should I be concerned about my blood fats?

Blood fats include cholesterol and triglycerides. Abnormal blood fats increase your risk for heart disease and stroke. Blood fats are also called blood lipids.

What is blood cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a wax-like fatty substance in your blood. It is made in your body by the liver. Small amounts of cholesterol are important for many body functions. Too much blood cholesterol or fat can build up in your blood vessels and block the blood flow to your heart. This may lead to heart disease and stroke.

There are 2 types of cholesterol in your blood:

1. High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) Cholesterol – GOOD cholesterol

Think of **HDL** as your “**H**ealthy” cholesterol.

HDL takes blood cholesterol back to your liver where it can be removed from your body. High levels are healthy for your heart.

2. Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) Cholesterol – BAD cholesterol

Think of **LDL** as your “**L**ousy” cholesterol.

LDL leaves cholesterol in the walls of your arteries causing them to narrow over time. High levels can lead to heart disease.

What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are another type of fat found in the blood. High triglyceride levels are also linked to heart disease.

If you have high triglycerides, your dietitian or dietetic assistant will give you information on how to lower them.

Will the cholesterol in my diet raise my blood cholesterol?

The cholesterol in food can raise blood cholesterol in some people. But it does not have as big an impact as saturated and trans fat on your blood cholesterol.

For a heart healthy diet, you should still limit dietary cholesterol.

Foods that are high in cholesterol include: animal foods such as untrimmed or marbled meat, poultry with skin, organ meats, high fat milk products and egg yolks. Eat these foods less often.

What about the fat in my diet?

The types of fat you eat can affect your blood cholesterol levels. Try to eat heart healthy fats more often. A healthy diet is low in saturated fat and trans fat.

Heart healthy fats:

Heart healthy fats are the unsaturated fats in your diet. They include:

- ✓ Monounsaturated fat
- ✓ Polyunsaturated fat
- ✓ Omega-3 fat

These fats do not raise your blood cholesterol levels. They can help lower LDL cholesterol when used in place of saturated fat and trans fat. Include foods that have unsaturated fat more often.

Foods that have unsaturated fats include:

- olive, canola, soybean, peanut and other vegetable oils
- soft non-hydrogenated margarines
- nuts and seeds
- avocados
- fatty fish such as mackerel, herring, trout, salmon and sardines

Unhealthy fats:

- Saturated fat
- Trans fat

These fats can raise your bad LDL cholesterol. Trans fat can also decrease your good HDL cholesterol. Limit your intake of foods that have saturated and trans fats.

Saturated fat is found in:

- high fat processed meats such as sausage, bologna, salami and hot dogs
- fatty meats such as prime rib and regular ground beef
- full fat dairy products such as whole milk, high fat cheese, cream, butter and lard
- coconut, palm and palm kernel oil

Trans fat is found in:

- shortening
- commercial baked goods
- fast foods, deep fried foods and foods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated oils
- margarines made with partially hydrogenated oils

What about fibre?

There are 2 types of dietary fibre: soluble and insoluble.

Both types of fibre are important for good health. Increasing soluble fibre in your diet can help to lower the risk of heart disease by reducing bad LDL cholesterol levels.

Soluble fibre is found in:

- dried or canned beans, peas and lentils
- whole grains such as oats, oat bran and barley
- cereal with Psyllium fibre
- fresh fruits such as citrus fruit, apples, apricots, pears, prunes and strawberries
- vegetables such as artichoke, broccoli, brussel sprouts, carrots, corn and squash

Be sure to drink plenty of fluids (8 to 10 cups of fluids) when increasing your fibre intake.

What about salt?

If you have high blood pressure or heart failure, it is very important to limit the amount of salt or sodium in your diet.

Ways to reduce salt or sodium in your diet include:

- ✓ take the salt shaker off the table. Try seasoning your foods with herbs, spices and lemon juice instead
- ✓ do not use salt in cooking
- ✓ replace onion, garlic and celery salt with the fresh product or powder
- ✓ eat at fast food restaurants less often
- ✓ eat less cured and processed meats:
 - ham
 - sausage
 - bacon
 - hot dogs
 - bologna

- ✓ Eat less processed or convenience foods that are high in salt or sodium:
 - canned soups
 - spaghetti or tomato sauce
 - processed cheese
 - soy sauce
 - pickles

In summary ...

To reduce your risk of heart disease, the most important changes that you can make in your diet are to:

- ✓ Limit saturated and trans fat. Choose heart healthy fats instead.
- ✓ Increase your fibre intake.
- ✓ Reduce your salt or sodium intake.

Recommended low fat cooking methods:

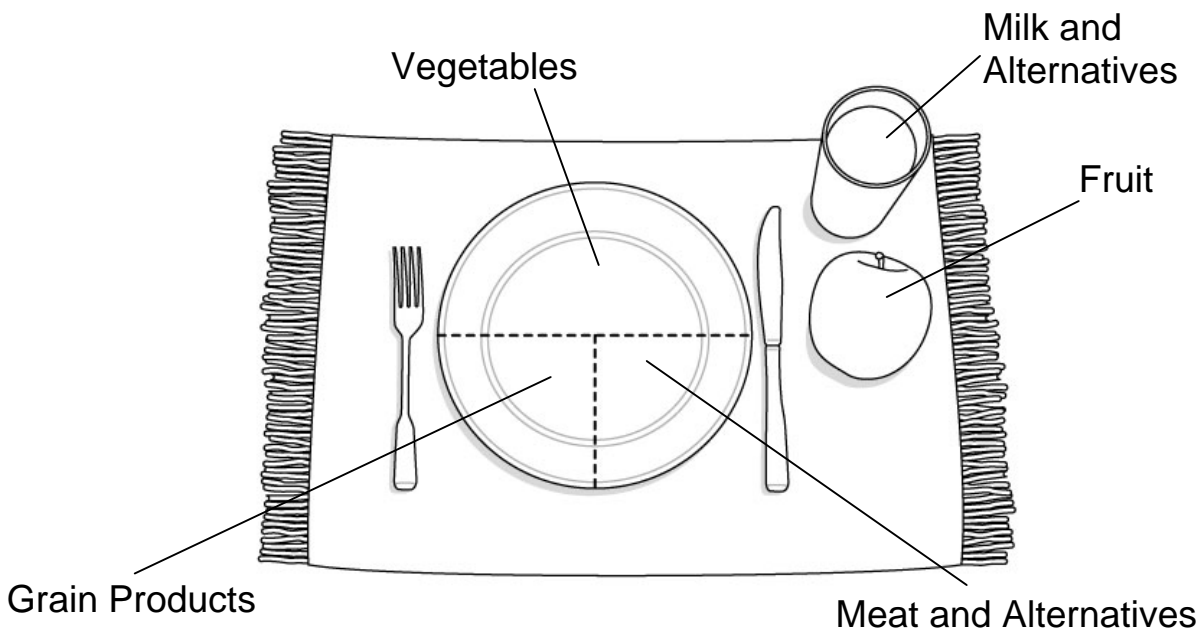
- bake
 - broil
 - grill
 - steam
 - barbeque
 - poach
 - microwave
 - use a non-stick pan
-

How to build a healthy meal

Heart healthy eating means enjoying a variety of foods from all 4 food groups in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide:

- ✓ **Vegetables and Fruit** – Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with a variety of vegetables. Choose dark green, red and orange colours more often. Have a piece of fruit for dessert.
- ✓ **Grain Products** – Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with whole grain products such as rice, pasta or breads.
- ✓ **Meat and Alternatives** – Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with healthy, low fat meat and alternatives such as fish, legumes (peas, beans and lentils), tofu or small portions of lean meats.
- ✓ **Milk and Alternatives** – Have a glass of low fat milk or a small container of yogurt to complete your meal.

Building a healthy meal is simple! Use the picture below as a guideline to help you.



You can get a copy of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide from Health Canada's website: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Food Recommended:	Food NOT Recommended:
<p>Meat and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fish, especially fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, and mackerel • lean cuts of meat with visible fat trimmed off such as strip loin or round • skinless chicken or turkey • peas, beans and lentils • egg whites or substitutes • soy based meat alternatives such as tofu and textured vegetable protein (TVP) 	<p>Meat and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deep fried chicken wings or battered fish • meat with visible fat • chicken or turkey with skin • organ meats: liver, kidney • regular luncheon meat, bacon, sausage or hot dogs • more than 3 egg yolks each week
<p>Milk and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skim or 1% milk, yogurt, cottage cheese • lower fat cheese (less than 20% M.F.) • low fat ice cream (1% M.F.), frozen yogurt (2% M.F.), sherbet • fortified soy beverages 	<p>Milk and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full fat milk & dairy products
<p>Vegetables and Fruits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all, except coconut and battered or deep fried vegetables 	<p>Vegetables and Fruits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coconut • battered or deep fried vegetables
<p>Grain Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole grain breads, cereals, pasta and rice • low fat snack foods such as air popped popcorn and low sodium pretzels 	<p>Grain Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commercial baked goods, such as cakes, pies, donuts and croissants • high fat snack foods such as potato chips and cheesies
<p>Fats and Oils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soft, non-hydrogenated margarine • olive, canola, soybean, peanut and other vegetable oils • salad dressings such as oil and vinegar or low fat 	<p>Fats and Oils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular sauces and gravies • cream cheese, creamy salad dressings and full fat mayo • butter, cream, lard and shortening • coconut or palm oil

My blood test results

My goals ...

Total Cholesterol:	Triglycerides:
HDL Cholesterol:	Fasting Blood Sugar:
LDL Cholesterol:	Other:

Date	Total Cholesterol	HDL Cholesterol	LDL Cholesterol	Triglycerides	Fasting Blood Sugar	Other

please turn over →

Date	Total Cholesterol	HDL Cholesterol	LDL Cholesterol	Triglycerides	Fasting Blood Sugar	Other

