

POOR DIET LINKED TO **HALF** OF HEART DISEASE, STROKE, DIABETES DEATHS...



Food choices can have a profound impact on your health. Most of us are aware that what we eat affects our health. But the results of a new study illustrates that fact vividly: Almost half of deaths in one year caused by heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes in a large group of Americans were linked with a poor diet.

Eat Heart Healthy

Following these nutritional strategies can help you reduce or even eliminate some risk factors, such as reducing total and LDL-cholesterol; lowering blood pressure, blood sugars and triglycerides; and reducing body weight. While most dietary plans tell you what you can't eat (usually your favorite foods!), the most powerful nutrition strategies help you focus on what you can and should eat. In fact, research has shown that adding certain foods to your diet is just as important as cutting back on others.

Decrease saturated fats and trans fats

The **American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology Lifestyle Management Guidelines** urge people to eat a healthy diet and decrease saturated fats and trans fats in their diet. Choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (from olive and canola oils, nuts, seeds, avocados, olives, flaxseed, soy and fatty fish).

- See "**Know Your Fats**" to learn how to eat good fats and avoid bad fats



Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables

Choose seven to nine-a-day

Aim for a combined seven - nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day provides a variety of antioxidants, B-Vitamins, dietary fiber and a host of additional plant chemicals known to help prevent disease.

One serving of fruit includes:

- 1 medium-sized piece of fresh fruit
- 1/2 medium banana
- 1/2 grapefruit 2 tablespoons dried fruit
- 1/2 cup canned fruit
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup most juices

One serving of vegetables includes:

- 1/2 cup cooked vegetables
- 1 cup raw or leafy vegetables

Eat a rainbow of colors

Eat a variety of orange carrots and oranges, red peppers, tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries, and peaches, purple plums, green celery, lettuce, and kiwis and yellow peppers and bananas. Choosing a rainbow of colors helps ensure a diverse intake of nutrients.

Increase fruits and vegetables in your diet

- Buy pre-cut vegetables and fruit – fresh or frozen to save time – bag them up for a snack or to add to a dish
- Have a vegetable-based soup or garden salad with light dressing with your usual sandwich at lunch
- Instead of a cookie, enjoy a frozen banana or grapes dipped in 1 teaspoon of chocolate syrup
- Keep fresh fruit on your desk or workspace
- Try a homemade trail mix of you choice of 2 tablespoons dried fruit and 2 tablespoons roasted nuts and/or seeds in a baggy to take with you if you predict you'll be missing a meal

**If you have high blood pressure, a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and grains is recommended [see [DASH diet](#)]*

Eat more fiber

As part of a healthy diet, fiber can reduce cholesterol. Dietary fiber is a type of carbohydrate that the body cannot digest. It's found primarily in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and beans. As fiber passes through the body, it affects the way the body digests foods and absorbs nutrients.

A diet rich in fiber has health benefits beyond cholesterol control: it helps control blood sugar, promote regularity, prevent gastrointestinal disease and helps in weight management.

There are two types of dietary fiber: soluble and insoluble. Each has a unique effect on health.

- **Soluble (viscous) fiber:** Provides the greatest heart-health benefit because it helps to lower total and LDL-cholesterol. Good sources of soluble fiber include oats, oat bran, barley, legumes (such as dried beans, lentils and split peas), psyllium, flaxseed, apples, pears and citrus fruits
- **Insoluble fiber:** Generally referred to as "roughage." Insoluble fiber promotes regularity, adds bulk and softness to stools, helps with weight regulation and helps prevent many gastrointestinal disorders. Good sources of insoluble fiber include wheat bran, whole wheat and other whole grain cereals and breads, nuts and vegetables. Foods contain a mix of soluble and insoluble fiber. To receive the greatest health benefit, eat a wide variety of all high-fiber foods

Overall, you should aim for a total intake of 25 or more grams of dietary fiber (soluble and insoluble) each day.

- Learn [how you can fit fiber into your diet](#)



Substitute animal protein with plant protein

Increase plant sources of protein and start reducing your intake of animal protein. Eating more beef, pork, and chicken with skin, and whole milk cheeses and dairy products means more intake of high amounts of cholesterol and saturated fat, both of which contribute to weight gain and increased risk of heart disease. So start replacing some animal fat meals with meatless meals. There are plenty of palatable nonmeat substitutes that provide good sources of protein but that also provide heart-friendly ingredients such as fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.



- Eat two to three vegetable protein meals weekly: split pea soup, garbanzo bean salad, bean-based meatless burgers, tofu stir-fry or textured vegetable protein
- Red meat should be eaten at no more than one meal per week. Choose the leanest cuts of meat possible with skin and visible fat removed. Replace red meat with white
- Eat two skinless poultry meals each week
- Eat a minimum of six ounces (2 servings) of **Omega-3 rich** fish weekly (cold-water fish such as tuna, salmon, trout, sardines, and herring). There are also **plant sources of Omega-3 fatty acids**

Increase whole grains

Increase whole grains and limit processed or refined carbohydrate foods (e.g., white bread, white pasta, white rice). Whole grain breads, brown rice, oats, barley, bulgur [a form of whole wheat], quinoa [a grain-like product], whole wheat pasta, whole grain crackers and cereals are called unrefined or whole-grain carbohydrates.

These foods provide more vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and dietary fiber than refined carbohydrates.



Limit sweets, desserts, and sugary sodas

Foods such as sweets and sugar sweetened beverages should be limited. You don't have to eliminate them from the menu altogether to derive benefit—just don't make them part of your everyday diet. A couple times a month is better than a couple times a week.

Choose low fat or non-fat dairy products

The American Heart Association suggests two – three servings per day of dairy. This is good for heart, bone and blood pressure health. Such sources are skim milk or 1% milk, 1% or nonfat yogurt or cottage cheese, and reduced fat cheeses.

- Read the **American Heart Association** article

If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation

Drinking alcohol is not encouraged, but if you do – drink in moderation. Moderate alcohol use is defined as no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men. Alcohol should be avoided with some medical conditions or medications. Talk to your doctor about drinking alcohol.

- Read Cleveland Clinic: **Alcohol and Your Heart**
- American Heart Association: **Alcohol and Heart Health**





meals and snacks appear to promote weight loss and maintenance and give you an opportunity to consume important nutrients throughout the day. Skipping meals only lowers metabolism and deprives you of key nutrients. Researchers have found that people who balance their calories into four to six small meals each day have lower cholesterol levels., so divide your calories into four to six smaller meals throughout the day.

- Learn [more](#)

Maintain and achieve a healthy body weight

A body mass index, or BMI, of 18 to 24.9 is considered ideal. Speak with your physician or registered dietitian to learn how you can maintain or achieve a healthier body mass index. Even a loss of 5 to 10% of your body weight can have a significant impact on your overall heart health. For instance, a 200 lb. female would have to lose only 10 to 20 pounds; a 280 lb. male would have to lose only 14 to 28 pounds.

- Learn more about [weight management](#)

Get moving

A healthy diet **ALONG WITH** exercise improves blood pressure, cholesterol and heart health. Engaging in aerobic exercise—even brisk walking—for at least thirty minutes most days of the week, in addition to maintaining an active lifestyle, can have considerable heart-health benefits. Regardless of the exercise regimen you choose, check with your physician before starting one.



Need Diet and Lifestyle Guidance?

For more information on a heart-healthy diet plan, contact:

[Preventive Cardiology](#)

Practice portion control

When you are trying to follow an eating plan that's good for you, it may help to know how much of a certain kind of food is considered a "serving." The list below offers some examples.

- **1 cup cooked pasta or rice**
Serving Size: 2 starch
Reference Size: Tennis ball
- **1 slice bread**
Serving Size: 1 starch
Reference Size: Compact disk case
- **1/2 cup cooked vegetables or fruit**
Serving Size: 1 vegetable or fruit
Reference Size: Baseball
- **1 ounce low-fat cheese**
Serving Size: 1 medium-fat protein
Reference Size: Pair of dice
- **1 teaspoon olive oil**
Serving Size: 1 fat
Reference Size: Half-dollar
- **3 ounces cooked meat**
Serving Size: 3 protein
Reference Size: Deck of cards or cassette tape
- **3 ounces tofu**
Serving Size: 1 protein
Reference Size: Deck of cards or cassette tape

Do not skip meals — more frequent mini-meals are better

Skipping meals is not recommended. Small, frequent