

EVERYONE SHOULD AIM FOR
A WELL-BALANCED DIET, GIVE
YOUR BODY WHAT IT NEEDS...

MARCH 2024

NUTRITION AWARENESS

YOU CAN MANAGE AND REDUCE YOUR
RISK OF DEVELOPING HEART DISEASE...
BY HEALTHY EATING



1 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



It's no secret that the choices we make can affect our heart. This includes the **4: diet, physical activity, sleep patterns and smoking**. According to the American Heart Association, one in every three adults has heart disease. Additionally, 103 million Americans have high blood pressure, which increases their risk of a heart attack or stroke.

To help you prevent heart disease, UC Davis Health registered dietitian Margie Junker, who specializes in

cardiovascular nutrition, has some suggestions.

2 GRAINS MOSTLY WHOLE GRAINS



Here are seven things that have been endorsed or suggested along with tips for what to avoid — for a healthy heart. (These points also coincide with the 2021 American Heart Association scientific statement on dietary guidance to improve cardiovascular health.)

1 GET PLENTY OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

EAT: blueberries are a great snack; spinach can also be easy to use. You can use fresh spinach as a salad or quickly, sauté with garlic and onions. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables is associated with a reduced risk of heart disease. Dried, fresh, frozen, or low sodium canned fruits and veggies all work.

AVOID: you should avoid eating any canned fruit in heavy syrup and any other foods with high fructose corn syrup.

3 PROTEINS HEALTHY SOURCES



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4 SPREADS AND PLANT OILS



5 FOOD AND DRINKS WITH LIMITED SUGARS



6 PREPARE FOODS WITH LITTLE OR NO SALT



7 ALCOHOL LIMIT INTAKE



4 USE LIQUID PLANT OILS

EAT: avocado oil is great because it has a high smoke point at 520 degrees. You can bake it with walnut oil for added flavor. Liquid plant oils are rich in unsaturated fats, which will reduce the low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and heart disease risk. These include oils from peanuts, most tree nuts, and flax seeds.

2 CHOOSE FOODS MADE WITH MOSTLY WHOLE GRAINS RATHER THAN REFINED GRAINS

EAT: favorite grains to eat are quinoa and quick oats. Both are whole grain and they are easy to cook. Choose wholegrain or wholemeal varieties as they contain more fiber, vitamins and minerals.

AVOID: stay away from foods containing processed white flour because there are less nutrients and no fiber.

3 CHOOSE HEALTHY SOURCES OF PROTEIN

EAT: there are some great options and "go-tos" in this category.

- **Plant protein:** eat a serving of nuts daily. Walnuts and almonds are known for their omega 3 fatty acids. A quarter cup of nuts makes a great snack. Eating more nuts is associated with lower risk of heart disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke. Lentils are high in fiber, high in protein, easy to

cook, and might cause less gastrointestinal (GI) discomfort than beans. A higher intake of legumes (beans and peas) is associated with lowering your risk for heart disease risk.

- **Fish and seafood:** eating salmon or seared ahi tuna are good because they are high in protein, have fewer calories and also contain healthy heart Omega 3 fatty acids.
- **Low-fat or fat-free dairy products:** non-fat Greek yogurt is great because of its versatility. It's high in

protein, has a lot of calcium, and can replace sour cream in many recipes. It is also a great breakfast option, stirred with quick oats and berries.

- **Lean cuts of meat and poultry:** there is a direct association between eating red meat and the risk of heart disease and death. That relationship is even stronger for processed meat such as bacon or hot dogs. Instead of processed meats, it is often choose skinless chicken thighs. It's leaner than most beef, affordable and has more flavor than chicken breast.

AVOID: processed meats. What's in it? It's a mystery! Also steer clear of full-fat dairy products.



AVOID: you should stay away from fats that are hard at room temperature, such as bacon grease, shortening and margarine. Avoid tropical oils (coconut, palm, and palm kernel), animal fats (butter and lard), and partially hydrogenated fats. Occasionally, you can use smaller amounts of coconut oil or butter to flavor specific recipes.

5 LIMIT DRINKING BEVERAGES AND EATING FOODS WITH ADDED SUGARS

EAT: use maple syrup in your coffee and oatmeal. You can also sweeten with small amounts of local honey.

AVOID: you should stay away from anything that is a chemically based sweetener and is processed with white sugar. Added sugars are associated with an increased risk of [type 2 diabetes](#), coronary heart disease and being overweight. Alternative sweeteners have shown mixed effects on metabolism.

6 CHOOSE AND PREPARE FOODS WITH LITTLE OR NO SALT

EAT: you can choose dried herb blends, fresh herbs, and citrus to elevate the natural taste of foods.

AVOID: try to avoid salt (sodium) as much as you can. There is a direct relationship between increased salt intake and [high blood pressure](#). In the United States, the [top sources of salt are packaged and processed foods](#), and foods prepared outside the home.

7 LIMIT YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE

DRINK: [water](#) with a splash of lemon or sliced cucumber is a great option for some added flavor.

AVOID: if you don't drink alcohol already, don't start. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit your intake. The risk of [atrial fibrillation \(A-fib\)](#) and stroke increases with increased alcohol intake. Stroke and coronary heart disease are lowest in those who drink 1-2 alcoholic beverages on a daily basis. The **American Heart Association** doesn't recommend for you to start drinking more alcohol to improve heart disease health.

STAY PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

In addition to eating right, it's important to be active to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. You can find



the right energy balance by combining a healthy dietary patterns with [at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week](#).

TAKEAWAYS

Starting and sticking to a cardiac diet is a process. If you are used to eating processed foods and refined carbs on a continual basis, you may find it difficult to make larger dietary changes. Trying the tips above may help.

Fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and oily fish are nutritious staple foods to include in a cardiac healthy diet. People may wish to limit processed foods, sugar, salt, and saturated fats.

It can be invaluable for people to plan their diet and be mindful of their choices when dining out. Getting daily exercise and managing stress are also beneficial for heart health.

EATING GUIDE

This food guide, shows what kind of foods you should eat, and how much, to have a healthy, balanced and more sustainable diet.

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Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

| Energy | Fat | Saturated | Sugars | Salt |
|-------------------|------|-----------|--------|------|
| 1046kJ 250kcal | 3.0g | 1.3g | 34g | 0.9g |
| | LOW | LOW | HIGH | MED |
| 13% | 4% | 7% | 38% | 15% |

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

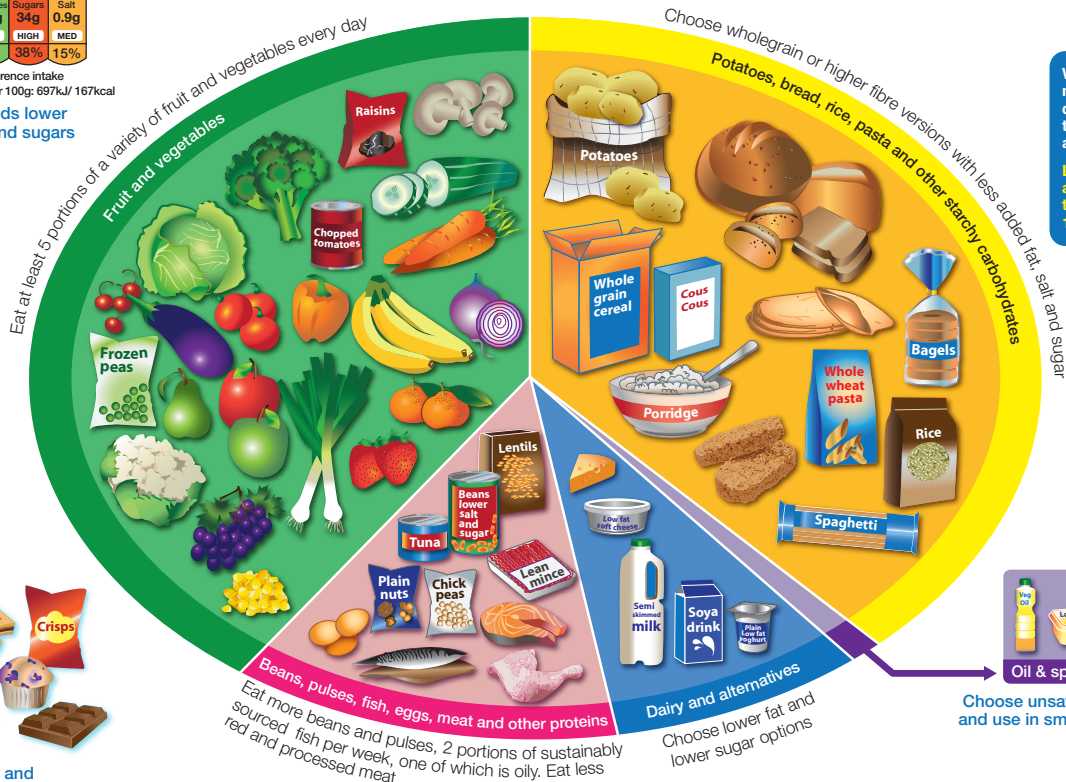
Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.



Eat less often and in small amounts

Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

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