
Heart Healthy Nutrition

Optimal nutrition and plenty of physical activity are ways you can improve your cardiovascular health.

Increase intake of vegetables and fruits

- Fruits and vegetables are naturally high in fiber and water. In addition to being great sources of vitamins and minerals, they keep you full and satisfied longer.
- Beans and legumes are an especially good source of fiber and protein

Increase intake of whole grains

- In addition to keeping you full longer, the fiber in whole grains promotes heart health
- Whole grain foods include whole-grain bread (whole wheat, stone-ground whole, multigrain), brown rice, quinoa, barley, oats/oatmeal

Incorporate more heart-healthy fats

- Unsaturated fats are heart-healthy, but still high in calories. Be mindful of portion sizes if you are trying to watch your weight. Unsaturated fats include:
 - Omega 3s:
 - Fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, mackerel, trout, sardines, and herring
 - Walnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, edamame
 - Oils such as: flax seed oil, soybean oil, canola oil
 - Omega 6s:
 - Nuts and seeds such as walnuts, pistachios, peanuts, almonds, cashews
 - Oils such as: olive oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil, corn oil, grapeseed oil, soybean oil
 - Lean meat, poultry, fish
 - Monounsaturated fats:
 - Oils such as: olive oil, avocado oil
 - Avocados, nuts, seeds

Limit or eliminate intake of fat that promotes atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries

- Trans fats and hydrogenated oils are NOT heart healthy
 - If at all possible, eliminate trans fats and hydrogenated oils from your diet.
 - When in doubt, check the label. 0mg or 0% trans fat is the only acceptable level.
 - Be wary of: processed snack foods, fried food, fast food, margarine, shortening
- Saturated fat
 - Most fat that is solid at room temperature is not good for the heart, thus the portion sizes should be limited. The American Heart Association recommends limiting saturated fats to less than 13 grams daily. If you do choose to eat these foods, be mindful of portion sizes and try to decrease frequency of consumption.
 - Limit foods high in saturated fat:
 - Poultry skin, dark meat
 - Marbling in red meat and solid fat around the edges of meat
 - Solid fat around pork chops, veal, and other sources of animal protein
 - Full fat dairy such as whole milk, creamer, ice cream
 - Other high fat meats such as sausage, bacon, pork roll
 - Butter, lard, ghee