

Love Your Heart with Heart Healthy Eating

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February is the perfect time to show your sweetheart and your heart some love! Celebrate American Heart Month by taking steps to reduce your risk for heart disease. Did you know heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the U.S? High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are three key risk factors. About half of all Americans have one or more of these risk factors. Other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can put you at a higher risk too, including diabetes, overweight/obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity, and stress. Healthy eating can help you manage your risk factors and aid in preventing heart disease.



Experts recommend a well-balanced diet full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and seafood. Other heart healthy tips include increasing omega-3 fatty acids and plant sterols/stanols (found in some margarines and juices); limiting saturated fat, *trans*-fat & cholesterol; and reducing sodium. Try these tips:

Choose whole grains (make at least half your grains whole grain):

- Choose more whole grains like oatmeal, 100% whole wheat bread, brown rice, and whole grain pasta
- Try making whole grain pancakes, quinoa salad, barley soup, or even popcorn
- Limit refined (processed) grains like white bread, white rice, and enriched pasta

Increase Omega-3 fatty acids

- Choose foods that contain ALA omega-3 fatty acids such as canola oil, flaxseed, walnuts, and soybeans
- Increase EPA & DHA omega-3 fatty acids by eating two 4-ounce servings of fatty fish each week
- Try grilled salmon, poached herring mixed with pasta, fish tacos made with baked trout, or tuna salad
- When buying eggs, look for eggs that are a source of omega-3 fatty acids

Limit your saturated fat (less than 7% of total calories) & cholesterol (less than 200mg/day):

- Replace butter and shortening with polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as canola oil or olive oil
- Choose low fat or fat free dairy products
- Select leaner meats like boneless skinless chicken breast, 97% lean ground beef, or pork loin
- Trim all visible fat from meats and then try broiling, roasting, or grilling
- Replace some of your red meat with fish, tofu or beans

Reduce your sodium (less than 1500 mg/day):

- Instead of seasoning food with salt, try adding herbs, garlic, lemon juice, or other spices
- Choose no more than 2 servings of processed meat (like luncheon meat or hotdogs) per week
- Try preparing your own soups or choosing no- or low-sodium canned soups

If you'd like to learn more about heart healthy eating, visit a registered dietitian and/or check out www.heart.org/



Erika Ford is a Dietetic Intern at WVU Healthcare and plans to become a Registered Dietitian. As the nation's food and nutrition experts, registered dietitians are committed to improving the health of their communities. To find a registered dietitian in your area, visit www.eatright.org and click on "Find a Registered Dietitian."