

# Eat for your Heart

Your heart is one of the strongest muscles in your body.

On an average, the heart of an adult beats about 72 times a minute and that of a child beats between 90 and 120 times a minute.

Your heart started beating about three weeks after you were conceived. If you live to be 70 your heart will have beat two and a half billion times. Each heartbeat pumps blood around the body, pushing it from the left heart chambers, through arteries of ever-decreasing size, finally reaching the capillaries in all parts of the body.

Once your body has taken oxygen and nutrients from the blood, it is returned to the heart via the veins to the right chambers of the heart. On its way back, the blood passes through the liver and waste products are removed.

As remarkable as this system is, it is very vulnerable to damage from the things we do to it, like smoking, eating an unhealthy diet or putting it under stress. Or you may be born with a heart condition. When your heart's functions become compromised, this is known as cardiovascular disease, a broad term that covers any disorder to the system that has the heart at its centre.

## **Eat Healthy to Help Prevent Heart Disease**

What kills Americans most? Heart disease. It's the No.1 cause of death in this country. You can lower your chances of getting heart disease. One way is to choose foods carefully. For a healthy heart, eat:

- less fat
- less sodium
- fewer calories
- more fiber.

## **Eat less Fat**

Some fats are more likely to cause heart disease—saturated fats and trans fats. These fats are usually found in foods from animals, such as meat, milk, cheese, and butter. They also are found in foods with palm and coconut oils. Eat less of these foods.

## **Eat less Sodium**

Eating less sodium can help lower some people's blood pressure. This can help reduce the risk of heart disease.

Sodium is something we need in our diets, but most of us eat too much of it. Much of the sodium we eat comes from salt we add to our food at the table or that food companies add to their foods. So, avoid adding salt to foods at the table.

## **Eat fewer Calories**

When we eat more calories than we need, we gain weight. Being overweight can cause heart disease. When we eat fewer calories than we need, we lose weight.

Eat more Fiber

Eating fiber from fruits, vegetables, and grains may help lower your chances of getting heart disease.

## **Diet Tips for a Healthy Heart**

- Eat a diet low in saturated fat, especially animal fats and palm and coconut oils.
- Add foods to your diet that are high in monounsaturated fats, such as olive oil, canola oil, and seafood.
- Eat foods containing polyunsaturated fats found in plants and seafood. Safflower oil and corn oil are high in polyunsaturated fats.
- Choose a diet moderate in salt and sodium.
- Maintain or improve your weight.
- Eat plenty of grain products, fruits, and vegetables.

<b>Replace:</b>	<b>With:</b>
whole or 2 percent milk, and cream	use 1 percent or skim milk
fried foods	eat baked, steamed, boiled, broiled, or microwaved foods
lard, butter, palm, and coconut oils	cook with unsaturated vegetable oils, such as corn, olive, canola, safflower, sesame, soybean, sunflower, or peanut
fatty cuts of meat, such as prime rib	eat lean cuts of meat or cut off the fatty parts
sour cream and mayonnaise	use plain low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese, or low-fat or "light" sour cream
sauces, butter, and salt	season vegetables with herbs and spices
regular hard and processed cheeses	eat low-fat, low-sodium cheeses
salted potato chips and other snacks	choose low-fat, unsalted tortilla and potato chips and unsalted pretzels and popcorn

## **Read the Food Label**

The food label can help you eat less fat and sodium, fewer calories, and more fiber. Look for certain words on food labels. The words can help you spot foods that may help reduce your chances of getting heart disease. The FDA has set rules on how these words can be used. So, if the label says “low-fat,” the food must be low in fat. Look at the side or back of the package. Here, you will find “Nutrition Facts. Stay away from “Trans fats”. Look for these words:

- Total fat
- Saturated fat
- Cholesterol
- Sodium.
- Trans fat

Look at the % Daily Value listed next to each term. If it is 5% or less for fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium, the food is low in these nutrients. That’s good. It means the food fits in with a diet that may help reduce your chances of getting heart disease.

## **Tips for Losing Weight**

- Eat smaller portions.
- Avoid second helpings.
- Eat less fat by staying away from fried foods, rich desserts, and chocolate candy. Foods with a lot of fat have a lot of calories.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.

## **Eating for a Healthy Heart**

The best way to lower your chances of getting heart disease is through your diet. Eat better foods and you’ll lower the risk of heart disease.

## **Remember:**

- Eat less fats and sodium.
- Reduce your calories if you’re over weight.
- Eat more fiber.
- Eat a variety of foods including plenty of bread, rice, cereal, fruit and vegetables.
- Drink more water.

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