

# MEDITERRANEAN DIET

for a healthier heart



# Healthy Heart Basics

## AN INTRODUCTION

### What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that is produced in the liver. It performs different functions in the human body. Some promote health, some do not. Your cholesterol levels are affected by how much cholesterol your body makes as well as the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in the foods you eat.

Your liver will produce more cholesterol if your diet is high in cholesterol and fat. Excess cholesterol builds up on the walls of the arteries that carry blood to the heart. Over time this build-up may slow or block blood flow to the heart.

High blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease. The higher your blood cholesterol levels, the greater your risk.

### Good vs. bad cholesterol

Cholesterol is carried through the body attached to protein “packages” known as lipoproteins. The low-density lipoproteins (LDL) are considered bad because they deposit cholesterol in the artery walls and cause a build-up of plaque. Because of this you want your LDL cholesterol to be as low as possible. The high-density lipoproteins (HDL) are considered good because they remove cholesterol from the blood. Since HDL cholesterol protects against heart disease, higher numbers are better.

### What are Triglycerides?

Triglycerides are another type of fat found in the blood. Because triglycerides and cholesterol can't dissolve in blood, they circulate throughout your body. High triglyceride levels may increase your risk for heart disease and may also harm your pancreas.

# Reducing Your Heart Disease Risk

## MORE THAN JUST HEALTHY EATING

There are many other things you can do besides heart healthy eating that can reduce your risk for heart disease.

### Be physically active

Physical activity helps to improve blood cholesterol by raising your HDL and lowering your LDL. It may also help you lose weight, lower blood pressure and reduce stress.

### Maintain a healthy weight

Excess weight tends to increase your LDL. Losing weight may help to lower your LDL and triglycerides and raise your HDL.

### Quit smoking

Smoking increases your risk for stroke and heart disease. If you quit smoking, in one year your risk of heart disease will drop by more than half.

For help in quitting, talk with your doctor, or sign up for a smoking cessation class. (See Additional resources on page 32).

### Keep scheduled visits with your doctor

By seeing your doctor regularly, you know your cholesterol levels and other tests or screening results, which may determine if you are at increased risk for heart disease. If found early, many heart conditions can be treated with lifestyle changes and medications instead of surgery.

# Heart Disease

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

High blood cholesterol is only one of the many factors that increase your risk of disease. Here are other factors. Check the boxes that apply to you.

- High LDL cholesterol
- Low HDL cholesterol
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Age (men more than 45 years old, women more than 55 years old)
- Family history of early heart disease (if your parent or sibling developed heart disease before age 55 for men or before age 65 for women)

## How many risk factors do you have?

The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk of heart disease. Your risk factors help determine your LDL goal.

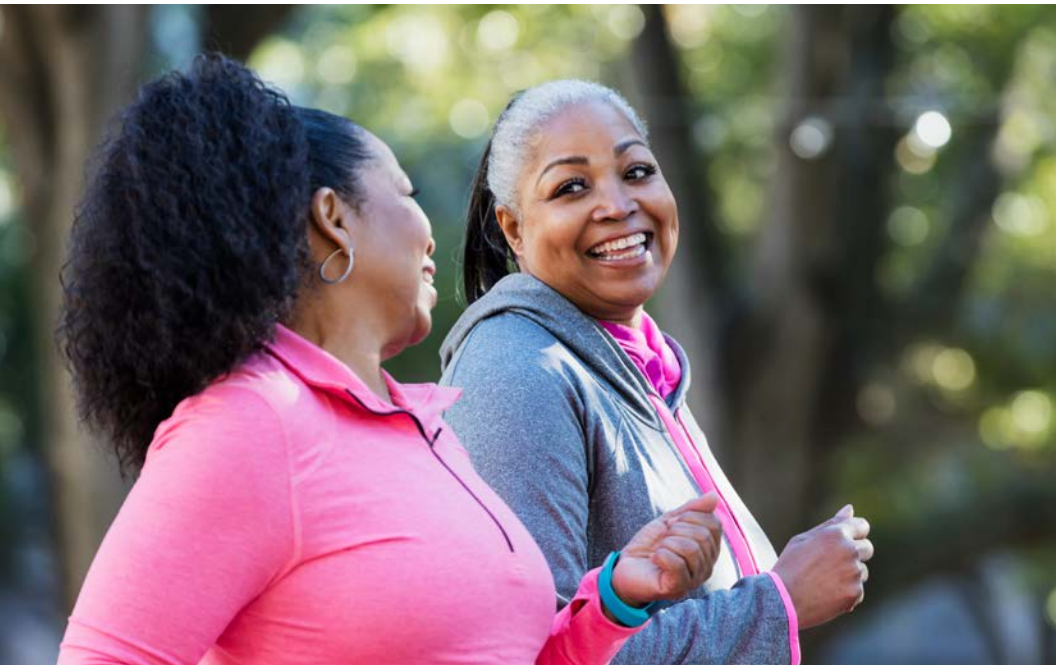
To further determine your risk of having a heart attack in the next 10 years, the Framingham risk calculator can be used. You can do this by going to the Web site for the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute at **<http://hin.nih.gov/atp/iii/calculator.asp?usertype=pub>**.

Your score is then used to determine what your LDL cholesterol goal should be. Check with your doctor to confirm the LDL goal that is right for you.

Here is what the goals are depending on your 10 year risk of a heart attack:

10 year risk of a heart attack	Risk status	LDL cholesterol goal
Less than 5%	Very Low	Less than 160
5-10%	Low	Less than 130
11-20%	Moderate	Less than 130
More than 20%	High	Less than 100, Less than 70 for some individuals

The good news is that you can lower your risk through TLC. Changing your diet to decrease saturated fat intake is an important place to start. This booklet will give you guidelines for lowering saturated fat and for making healthy food choices.



# Mediterranean Diet

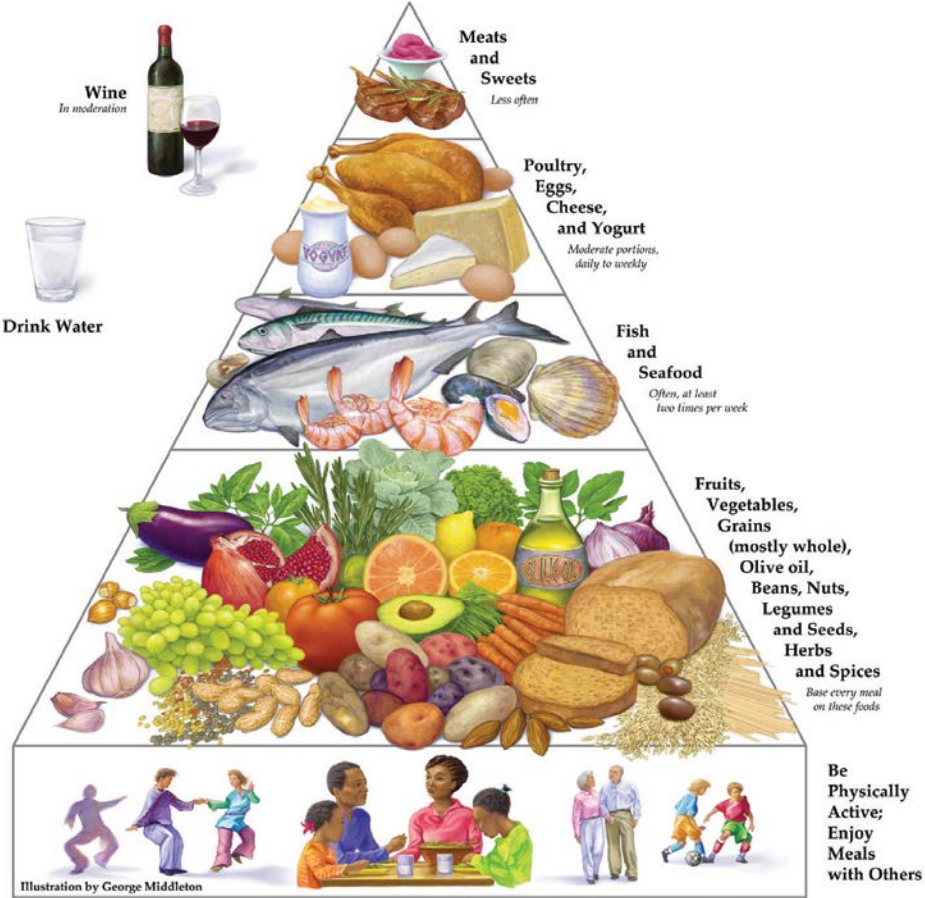
## What is the Mediterranean Diet?

The Mediterranean diet is linked with a lower risk of heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and possibly asthma and arthritis that may be caused by inflammation. It is based on the eating and exercise habits of many of the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea. This way of living includes eating more fruits and vegetables, using healthier oils (like olive oil) and getting more exercise. People who eat this way are more active and tend to live longer lives.



# Mediterranean Diet Food Pyramid

Here is what the goals are depending on your 10 year risk of a heart attack:



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# Mediterranean Diet

## DECREASE YOUR RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASE

### Key Points of the Diet

- Eat plant-based foods every day, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds.
- Eat a variety of unprocessed, home-cooked foods.
- Eat five or more servings of vegetables and two to four servings of fruit every day (One serving is a small piece of fruit, ½ cup of cooked vegetables or 1 cup of raw fruits or vegetables)
- Use Extra virgin olive oil as main fat.
- Avoid foods high in trans fats (these foods will have the words “partially hydrogenated oils” on the ingredients list), such as store-bought crackers, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries, flour tortillas, and margarine. Read the label for other foods high in trans fats.
- Avoid foods that have palm kernel oil, vegetable shortening, or fully hydrogenated fat in the ingredients list.
- Eat at least two fish meals per week, such as salmon, trout, halibut, or tuna (limit tuna to 6 oz. per week).
- Replace red meat with fish or poultry. Red meat, if eaten at all, should be limited to one or two times a month.
- Have one or two servings of fat-free and low-fat dairy products daily. One serving is 1 cup.



- Limit egg yolks to seven per week (including those used in cooking and baking).
- Try fresh fruit for dessert instead of other sweets.

## **Other Lifestyle Habits of the Mediterranean Population**

- Regular physical activity. Aim for 30 minutes or more 5 days a week.
- Moderate amounts of red wine are consumed with meals (check with your health care professional before drinking).

Fast food and convenience foods are not a part of the Mediterranean lifestyle

### **Sample Menu**

#### **Breakfast:**

Oatmeal with ground flaxseeds; Fat-free milk or almond milk; Fresh blueberries; Slice of whole-grain bread with “Old-fashioned” peanut butter

#### **Lunch:**

Lentil soup; Salad with fresh carrots, tomatoes, walnuts, and extra virgin olive oil and vinegar; Whole-grain bread with all olive oil/balsamic oil for dipping; Cubed watermelon and cantaloupe

#### **Dinner:**

Grilled salmon; Steamed zucchini and summer squash; Brown rice; Salad with fresh vegetables, walnuts, and extra virgin olive oil and vinegar; Strawberries and plain nonfat yogurt

# Mediterranean Eating Plan

## BREADS, CEREALS, RICE, PASTA, AND OTHER GRAINS (Daily)

### Key Points of the Diet

Breads, cereals, rice, pasta and other grains are generally high in carbohydrates and fiber, and low in saturated fat, cholesterol and calories. Some exceptions to this include bakery breads, sweet bread products and cookies.

Increasing your intake of fiber is important in lowering your cholesterol. To increase the fiber in your diet, at least half of your selections from this group of food should be from whole grain choices. Read more about fiber in for your consideration.

Here is a guide to buying higher fiber, lower fat and cholesterol containing bread and grain products.



## What should I eat?

- Choose whole grain bread, pita bread, tortillas and rolls often.
- Lower fat baked goods; low fat muffins, crackers. Check food labels and choose one with 3 or fewer grams of total fat per serving.
- Cold or hot unsweetened whole grain cereals. Check food labels and choose a cereal high in fiber with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving.
- Whole grains like brown and wild rice, whole grain pastas, quinoa, barley, bulgur, and oats.

## What should I limit?

- High fat baked goods, croissants, muffins, biscuits, doughnuts, pastries and pies.
- High fat granolas, muesli and oat bran types made with coconut and palm oils.

# Mediterranean Eating Plan

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (Daily)

Fruits and vegetables are great sources of fiber and important nutrients and antioxidants. Current recommendations encourage us to eat 10 servings a day. That sure can sound like a lot! It's easier to achieve this goal than you think; it's about 2 cups of fruit a day and 2-1/2 cups of vegetables.

Here are some suggestions to increase fruits and vegetables in your diet.

### Make it easy

- Keep a bowl of fruit within easy reach on the kitchen counter or your desk at work so that you can grab a piece of fruit when you're hungry.
- Buy packaged, ready-to-eat fresh vegetables and fruits. These cut down on preparation time.
- Use the microwave to quickly cook vegetables.

### Pump up the flavor

- Dip raw vegetables in hummus, or peanut butter, or plain yogurt.
- Toss raw or cooked broccoli and cauliflower with low-fat Italian dressing and parmesan cheese to make a flavorful side dish.
- Roast vegetables and fruits to bring out their flavor. Just drizzle them with a small amount of olive oil, and bake them in the oven until they are tender.
- Season cooked vegetables with lemon juice and a small amount of olive oil. For extra flavor, add fresh herbs such as basil, tarragon, and sage.

- Try baked apples or pears topped with cinnamon and honey for a delicious dessert.

## Take small steps

- Mix sliced fruit or frozen berries with yogurt or cereal.
- Sauté onions, green peppers and/or mushrooms in your omelet.
- Add apple chunks, pineapple, grapes, or raisins to tuna or chicken salad.
- Make fruit smoothies by blending together fresh or frozen fruit, fruit juice, and yogurt.
- Add dried or fresh fruit to oatmeal, pancakes, and waffles.
- Add lots of colorful vegetables, such as red cabbage, carrots, and bell peppers, to green salads.
- Top salads with dried cranberries or raisins, or with sliced pears, oranges, nectarines, strawberries, or grapefruit.
- Add extra vegetables, such as grated zucchini or carrots, spinach, kale, and bell peppers, to pasta sauces and soups.
- Add lots of vegetables to sandwiches. Lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, and avocado slices are flavorful choices.



# Mediterranean Eating Plan

## FATS AND OILS

Fat is a necessary part of a healthy eating plan. Some fats are healthier than others. You can help to lower your blood cholesterol when you replace saturated fats with unsaturated fat. Just be sure to use sparingly to keep calories in check. Below is a guide to choosing fats that are healthier for your heart. A Mediterranean Eating plan includes healthy fats daily.

Limit as much as possible	
High in saturated fats	High in trans fats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pastries, pies, and bakery items</li><li>• palm oil, palm kernel oil, and coconut oil</li><li>• marbled meats and meats such as sausage, cold cuts, hot dogs, bacon</li><li>• Regular cheese</li><li>• butter and dairy products with whole milk, such as cheese, cream, whole milk, and ice cream</li><li>• chocolate</li></ul>	<p>Processed foods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• chips</li><li>• cookies, pastries</li><li>• fried foods</li><li>• fast food</li><li>• crackers</li><li>• stick margarine</li><li>• regular shortening</li><li>• hydrogenated oils</li></ul>

## Choose in moderation

High in monounsaturated fats	High in polyunsaturated fats	High in omega-3 fat*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• olive oil</li> <li>• canola oil</li> <li>• peanut oil and peanut butter</li> <li>• olives</li> <li>• avocados</li> <li>• almonds</li> <li>• pecans</li> <li>• macadamia nuts</li> <li>• cashews</li> <li>• hazelnuts</li> <li>• pistachio nuts</li> <li>• peanuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safflower oil</li> <li>• corn oil</li> <li>• walnuts</li> <li>• soybeans</li> <li>• sunflower oil &amp; seeds</li> <li>• oils made from seeds</li> <li>• brazil nuts (has about equal amounts of mono- &amp; polyunsaturated fats)</li> <li>• soft tub margarine with "0" trans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• salmon</li> <li>• sardines</li> <li>• mackerel (pacific or jack)</li> <li>• herring</li> <li>• tuna (canned light)</li> <li>• tuna (albacore)</li> <li>• Pollack</li> <li>• trout</li> <li>• soybean oil</li> <li>• walnuts</li> <li>• walnut oil</li> <li>• ground flaxseeds</li> <li>• flaxseed oil</li> <li>• canola oil</li> </ul>

\*The fish listed tend to have lower amounts of mercury.



# Mediterranean Eating Plan

## DAIRY (weekly)

Like meats, regular dairy foods that have fat such as whole and 2% milk, cheese and ice cream are also high in saturated fat and cholesterol. However, dairy products are an important source of nutrients like calcium and vitamin D.

Eating two to three servings per day of low fat and nonfat dairy products is one way to get these nutrients. Here is a guide to buying low fat and nonfat dairy foods.





## What should I eat?

- Fat-free or 1% cow's, soy, or rice milk
- Fat-free creamer or evaporated skim milk
- Low fat and nonfat yogurt
- Low fat or part-skim hard cheeses like part skim mozzarella. Try to find cheeses with less than five grams of fat per serving. Check the food label.
- Low fat or nonfat soft cheeses like 1% or nonfat cottage cheese, low fat farmer's cheese, low fat and nonfat cream cheese or part skim ricotta.
- Low fat frozen dairy desserts like low fat frozen yogurt or ice cream, fruit ices, sorbets and popsicles

## What should I limit?

- Whole and 2% cow's/soy milk
- Cream and half & half
- Regular yogurt
- Regular fat hard cheeses like cheddar, gruyere, Monterey jack, parmesan, provolone, or Swiss.
- Soft cheeses like brie, regular cream cheese, regular cottage cheese or whole milk ricotta.
- Regular ice cream, ice cream bars and sandwiches

# Mediterranean Eating Plan

## MEAT (monthly) POULTRY, AND FISH (weekly)

To lower your blood cholesterol level, select lean meats, poultry, fish and shellfish most often. Try baking, steaming, broiling or grilling instead of frying.

Since even the leanest meat, chicken, fish and shellfish have saturated fat and cholesterol; limit the total amount you eat to five ounces or less per day. (Three ounces is the about the size of a deck of cards.)



## What should I eat?

- Lean trimmed beef cuts like tenderloin, sirloin round or flank steak, 93-96% lean ground beef
- Game like elk, buffalo and venison
- Trimmed pork cuts like tenderloin, loin roast or chop, 95% lean ham, turkey bacon or Canadian bacon
- Veggie dogs, veggie bratwurst, low fat beef, pork or turkey hot dogs, turkey pepperoni
- Skinless chicken and turkey, ground chicken or ground turkey breast
- Baked, broiled, or grilled fish or shellfish. (Choosing fish more often, twice a week is recommended)
- Egg whites, egg substitutes, eggs with Omega-3 fatty acids

## What should I limit?

- Prime rib, T-bone, rib-eye steaks, brisket, pot roast and regular 70-90% ground beef, organ meats
- Bacon, sausage, ribs, pork shoulder roast, chitterlings, organ meats
- Bratwurst, hot dogs, salami, pepperoni, bologna, pork rinds
- Chicken and turkey skin, chicken and turkey wings or gizzards, duck and goose
- Fried or breaded fish

# Mediterranean Eating Plan

## MEAT, POULTRY, AND FISH

### What are meat substitutes?

Dry peas, beans and tofu (also called bean curd) are great meat substitutes that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Dry beans and peas also have a lot of fiber, which can help lower blood cholesterol.

- Try adding 1/2 cup beans to pasta, soups, casseroles and vegetable dishes.
- Make beans the centerpiece of the meal as in beans and rice.
- Tofu takes the flavor of marinades as well. Try marinating tofu in a nonfat dressing or tangy sauce and then grill or bake it for a heart healthy dish. See For your consideration for more information on soy products.

### What about eggs?

Egg yolks are high in dietary cholesterol and should be limited to no more than three to four yolks per week.

What can you do if you want to make a recipe with whole eggs in it?

Egg whites have no cholesterol and you can substitute them for whole eggs in recipes.

- Two egg whites are equal to one whole egg.
- Cholesterol free egg substitute can be used in place of whole eggs. Check packaging for amounts equal to one whole egg. Often, 1/4 cup is equal to one whole fresh egg.

## What should I eat?

- Lean trimmed beef cuts like tenderloin, sirloin round or flank steak, 93-96% lean ground beef
- Game like elk, buffalo and venison
- Trimmed pork cuts like tenderloin, loin roast or chop, 95% lean ham, turkey bacon or Canadian bacon
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- Chicken and turkey skin, chicken and turkey wings or gizzards, duck and goose
- Fried or breaded fish

# Mediterranean Eating Plan

## SWEETS AND SNACKS

- Limit Sweets with large amounts of sugar and saturated fat to a few times a week or less
- Try fresh fruit for a dessert instead.
- Many sweets and snacks, like baked goods, cheese crackers and some chips are often high in saturated fat. Here is a buying guide to purchasing lower saturated fat containing sweets and snacks.
- Also, remember that although these treats may be low in fat, most are not low in calories.



## What's a better option?

### Use Sparingly

- Low fat cookies or cakes like angel food cake, animal crackers, fig and other fruit bars, ginger snaps, graham crackers, vanilla wafers.
- Fat-free or low fat prepared pudding. Pudding from mix made with nonfat or 1% milk.
- Low fat ice cream, frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet.
- Gelatin desserts. Use fat-free or low fat non-dairy toppings or whipped cream if used.
- Baked snack chips like baked tortilla or potato chips or pretzels.
- Low fat crackers like melba toast, rye crisps, saltine crackers, rice or corn cakes.
- Air popped popcorn or low fat microwave popcorn.

## What should I limit?

- Regular fat cookies and baked goods.
- Regular puddings or puddings from mix made with whole or 2% milk.
- Regular fat ice cream and frozen desserts
- Whipped cream or non-dairy topping
- Fried tortilla, corn or potato chips
- Regular crackers or crackers containing hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- Buttered popcorn.

# Nutrition Specifics

## WHAT'S THE GOAL?

Use the following chart to determine your daily fat and saturated fat gram intake.

Select a daily calorie level first–

- If you need to lose some weight, choose 1200-1600 calories per day.
- To maintain weight, or if you are very active, choose 1800 calories or more per day.

Your Registered Dietitian can help if you have additional questions regarding your needs.

Calories	Saturated/ Trans Fat	Sodium	Fiber
1200	9 grams	1500-2000 mgs	20 gms
1400	11 grams	1500-2000 mgs	20 gms
1600	12 grams	1500-2000 mgs	25 gms
1800	14 grams	1500-2000 mgs	25 gms
2000	15 grams	1500-2000 mgs	30 gms
2200	17 grams	1500-2000 mgs	30 gms
2400	19 grams	1500-2000 mgs	35 gms



Eating a diet high in saturated fat and trans fat is what raises cholesterol the most.

- Saturated fat is found mostly in animal foods, such as fatty meats, poultry skin, and whole fat dairy foods. It's also found in many snack foods and bakery goods.
- Trans fats can also raise cholesterol. Trans fat is found in foods that contain "hydrogenated" oils in them. It is found in foods such as baked goods, fried foods, shortening, and stick margarine.



# Food Labels

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

### Serving size

Check this information first. The amount of calories and nutrients listed on the label are based on one serving of food. If you are eating twice the serving size, you are getting twice the calories, fat, etc.

### Saturated fat & Trans fat

Use this information if you are watching your fat intake.

### Sodium

Eating less salt or sodium may help to reduce blood pressure. For blood pressure control, try to limit sodium to 1500-2000 mgs per day.

### Fiber

Try to aim for foods with at least 3 grams fiber per serving. Aim for a total of 20 - 35 grams per day.

# Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)

Servings Per Container 2

## Amount Per Serving

**Calories** 250      **Calories from Fat** 110

**Total Fat** 12g      18%

Saturated Fat 3g      15%

*Trans* Fat 3g

**Cholesterol** 30mg      10%

**Sodium** 470mg      20%

**Total Carbohydrate** 31g      10%

Dietary Fiber 0g      0%

Sugars 5g

**Protein** 5g

Vitamin A      4%

Vitamin C      2%

Calcium      20%

Iron      4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.  
Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on  
your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	30g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

# Healthy Shopping

## TIPS FOR COOKING AND SHOPPING

### Healthy eating tips

Healthy eating takes time and planning, but it's worth the effort.

Here are a few examples of small changes you can start to make today.

#### **Trying to eat more fruits and vegetables?**

Add fruit or vegetable servings to one snack or meal each day.

#### **Trying to eat at home more often?**

Plan several, quick meals you can shop for and prepare on weekends. Enjoy the leftovers during the week.

#### **Want to eat less fat?**

Experiment with low fat cooking methods. Use non-stick spray, an indoor grill, or invest in non-stick skillets and pans. Identify one high fat food you are eating and find a substitute, eat a smaller portion, or eat it less often.

#### **Want to know more about the food you eat?**

Learn to read food labels. Keep a food diary for one day or more. Weigh and measure your portions using measuring cups.

#### **Look for:**

- Fiber—More than 3 gms/serving
- Total fat—Less than 5 gms/serving
- Sodium—Less than 400 mgs/serving

## Ideas for a healthy shopping list

### **Meat, poultry, shellfish**

- Chicken or turkey breast
- Fish
- Lean cuts of red meat—round or sirloin
- Lean ham
- Extra lean ground beef (93% or more lean)
- Frozen entrees—low fat, low sodium Healthy Choice®

### **Dairy products**

- Skim or 1% milk
- Low fat or nonfat yogurt
- Low fat cheese (under 3 grams fat per ounce)
- Low fat sour cream or cream cheese

### **Fats and oils** (use only small amounts)

- Extra virgin Olive oil
- Trans fat free spreads
- Light mayonnaise and salad dressing

### **Sweets and snacks**

- Popsicles, frozen yogurt, sherbet
- Fig bars cookies, gingersnaps, animal crackers
- Low fat popcorn, unsalted pretzels

### **Fruits and vegetables**

- Use fresh, frozen, or no salt added
- Buy in season, use a variety of colors

### **Breads, cereals, pasta**

- Whole grain breads and crackers
- Brown rice, whole wheat pasta
- High fiber cereal made with bran
- Canned, dried beans such as kidney, pinto, or garbanzo beans

### **Pantry staples**

- A variety of herbs and spices
- Flavored vinegar
- Non-stick Pam® spray
- Hot sauce, salsa

# Eating Out

## LOW CALORIE AND HEART HEALTHY TIPS

### Eating out tips

#### Keep portions small

- Keep normal portions in mind; think about what you would usually eat at home.
- Ask for a take-out container, or share an entrée.
- Share tempting desserts with your whole table, just a bite is often enough.
- Order smaller portions to begin with. Senior meals, or appetizer portions are usually about the right size.

#### Eat less fat and calories

- Choose meals marked “heart healthy” or “light”.
- Eat less added fats like mayonnaise, butter, salad dressing, and sauce—order on the side and use a small amount.
- Ask for food served without cheese.
- Make special requests—most restaurants will gladly prepare to order.

#### Choose broiled, grilled or roasted food, and lean meats.

- Choose low or no calorie beverages
- Order unsweetened tea, sparkling water, or fat-free or low fat milk.
- In coffeehouses, order nonfat ‘skinny’ drinks in smallest portions.
- Use alcohol in moderation, if at all, (1 drink for women, 2 for men).

## Other things you can do...

- Ask that non-ordered foods such as chips or bread be removed from the table.
- Choose more whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Always order a salad or vegetable to help fill you up.
- Choose low fat or nonfat dairy products.



# For Your Consideration

## HEART HEALTHY TOPICS

The following diet recommendations have been found to have some benefit for heart health. They are being studied further.

### Omega-3 fats

Recent research is showing that Omega-3 polyunsaturated fats may have important heart health benefits. Specific types of Omega-3 fatty acids include ALA (Alpha-Linoleic Acid), EPA (eicosapentanoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). Most concentrated sources of DHA and EPA are found in certain fish including salmon, albacore tuna, mackerel, trout, herring and sardines.

DHA and EPA appear to promote heart health by preventing platelets from clotting and sticking to the artery walls. Decreased clotting helps reduce the chances of blockages in an artery and therefore decreases the risk for heart attack and stroke.

The American Heart Association recommends eating fish at least twice a week in place of high saturated meats.

ALA is found in plant sources such as flaxseeds, walnuts, canola oil and soy oil. The evidence is less clear about ALA's role in promoting heart health.

### Soy protein

At this time it is unclear if soy food products reduce the risk of heart disease. However, soy foods such as edamame, tofu, soy nuts and butters, soy burgers, and soy milk, when they replace foods such as cheese, hamburgers, and whole milk are still a heart healthy choice.



## Soluble fiber

Fiber is a substance found only in plants such as fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains. The American Dietetic Association and the National Cancer Institute recommend eating 20–35 grams of fiber each day. There are both soluble and insoluble fibers in all fiber-containing foods. These fibers work differently, but both contribute to your health.

Soluble fiber is the form that may lower blood cholesterol. Some foods are higher in soluble fiber than others. To help you increase your intake of soluble fiber try some of these soluble fiber-rich foods: oats, barley, apples, pears, oranges, peas and legumes (lentils, split peas, pinto, kidney, garbanzo and lima beans) and psyllium enriched cereals or fiber supplements.

## Plant stanols

Plant stanols/sterols occur naturally in fruits, vegetables, seeds, and beans. These compounds block the absorption of cholesterol that you eat. You can also take a plant stanols/sterols supplement.

The daily dose recommended for lowering cholesterol is at least 2 grams of plant stanols/sterols as directed on the packaging. Remember that although these products can block absorption of cholesterol that you eat, they do not reduce the amount of cholesterol your body naturally makes so your dietary changes will have a large impact on reducing cholesterol.

## What about alcohol?

In some studies, moderate alcohol consumption was shown to raise your HDL cholesterol. However the American Heart Association does not recommend you start drinking if you don't do so already.

Moderate alcohol consumption is defined as no more than 1–2 drinks per day for men, 1 per day for women. A drink is considered 5oz wine, 12oz beer or 1.5oz spirits. You may be asked to limit your alcohol consumption if you have high triglycerides or high blood pressure. Alcohol may interfere with medications, so if you're unsure if alcohol is for you, ask your doctor.

# Additional Resources

ORGANIZATIONS, NEWSLETTERS,  
IN PERSON OR ONLINE

## Kaiser Permanente

Individual appointment with a **Registered Dietitian**

### Healthy Education Classes

- Living Well with Heart Failure, Heart Failure University, Weight Management, Diabetes/Prediabetes, Kidney, Cooking, Exercise, Stress Management
- Call **404-365-0966** to schedule an individual appointment or class

**kp.org** - various tools available

### Wellness Coaching by Phone

**1-866-862-4295**

## Other Resources

- American Heart Association  
**heart.org**
- National Heart Lung and Blood Institute  
**nhlbi.nih.gov**
- Oldways  
**oldwayspt.org**
- MyPlate  
**choosemyplate.gov**

# Your Personal Plan

## Tracking my personal diet action plan

Think about these questions, and then fill in the action plan below:

1. Do I choose whole grains such as brown rice, whole grain cereals, or whole wheat pasta?
2. How many servings of fruits and vegetables do I eat a day?
3. What can I do to make a change in my diet?

**Examples:**

- I will choose whole grain cereals instead of cornflakes.
- I will eat 8 servings of vegetables and fruits 2 days this week.

4. What kind of protein foods do I eat?
5. Do I eat fish and limit red meat?
6. Do I choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products?

**Examples:**

- I will eat fish 2 times this week.
- I will switch to low fat cheese or reduce my cheese intake

7. Limit saturated fat and avoid trans fat
8. Choose healthy fats instead, such as olive, canola, or flaxseed oil instead of butter

**Examples:**

- Instead of using vegetable oil, I will use olive oil.
- I will use olive oil and vinegar on my salads.

List what you are willing to try:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

