

Protect Your Heart: Plan and Cook Heart-Healthy Meals

You can protect your heart and blood vessels by making smart choices when you cook. Small changes can make a big difference in your health. See the sections below for tips on how to

- plan heart-healthy meals and snacks
- cook heart-healthy meals

Place a check mark next to 2 or 3 things you're ready, willing, and able to try this week. Then use this list for more ideas later on.

For healthy recipes and food information, visit www.diabetes.org/MyFoodAdvisor.

Plan heart-healthy meals and snacks

Choose lean meat, poultry, and fish.

- Check food labels and choose meats with 5 grams of fat or less in each serving.
- Choose lean cuts of beef such as round, sirloin, and flank steak; tenderloin; rib, and rump roast; T-bone, porterhouse, and cubed steak.
- Pick lean types of pork: ham, Canadian bacon, tenderloin, and rib and loin chops.
- Buy sandwich meats with 3 grams of fat or less in each ounce.
- Other lean choices are leg of lamb, lamb chops, and roast lamb, and game, such as venison.
- Buy poultry such as chicken, turkey, and Cornish hen without the skin (or remove the skin).
- Eat fish 2 or 3 times a week. Albacore tuna, herring, mackerel, rainbow trout, sardines, and salmon are great choices.

Have a meatless meal at least once a week.

- Cook a vegetable pizza or lasagna.
- Try meatless chili
- Make black bean soup or another hearty soup.
- Stir-fry vegetables with tofu.

Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy foods.

- Choose fat-free (skim) milk, ½% milk, or 1% milk.
- Use fat-free or low-fat yogurt.



Choose heart-healthy foods to protect your heart and blood vessels.

- Buy lower-fat cheeses: cottage cheese, grated Parmesan, and any cheese with 3 grams of fat or less per ounce.

Choose whole-grain breads.

- Check the list of ingredients on foods made from grains. Choose foods that show “whole” or “whole grain” as the first ingredient. Whole-wheat flour, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, popcorn, whole-rye flour, barley, and bulgur are all whole grains.

Make a whole-grain side dish several times a week.

- Try whole-wheat pasta instead of regular pasta.
- Have brown rice, whole-wheat couscous (a quick-cooking grain), or a boxed whole grain mix instead of white rice.

Have plenty of fruits and vegetables.

- Eat at least one vegetable or a salad at lunch and at dinner.
- Eat dark green and dark yellow vegetables every day, such as broccoli, spinach, collards, kale, carrots, squash, and peppers.
- Snack on cut-up raw vegetables and fruit.
- Choose fruit for dessert—or when you're craving something sweet.

Cut back on salt.

- Check food labels and choose foods with less salt (sodium).

Cook heart-healthy meals

Cook with less fat and with heart-healthy fats.

- Use low-fat ways to cook. Broil, microwave, bake, roast, poach, steam, or grill your food.
- Use nonstick pans and cooking sprays.

If you use fat for cooking, choose fats that help your cholesterol and triglycerides.

- Cook with olive oil, canola oil, corn oil, sunflower oil, or safflower oil.

Boost the flavor with seasonings and sauces instead of salt and fat.

- Look for recipes that use herbs, spices, and lemon juice for flavor.
- Cook without adding salt.
- Try lemon juice, lemon pepper, or other salt-free seasoning on fish.
- Marinate chicken in low-fat Italian dressing and then bake or grill it.

Get rid of fat when you can.

- Trim fat from meat and poultry.
- Roast food on a rack to let the fat drip off.
- Make soup a day ahead. Then refrigerate the soup. Before you reheat it, lift off the layer of fat that has risen to the top and throw it away.

Smart food choices: What to try and why		
Instead of...	Try this...	Why?
whole milk or 2% milk	fat-free milk or 1% milk	less total fat, less saturated fat, and less cholesterol
regular cheese	low-fat cheese	
snack foods with trans fat, hydrogenated oil, palm oil, or coconut oil	trans fat-free, or low-fat snack foods	less total fat, less saturated fat
regular mayonnaise	fat-free plain yogurt or low-fat mayonnaise	less total fat
sour cream	fat-free sour cream	less total fat, less saturated fat
regular stick margarine	special cholesterol-lowering margarine or trans fat-free margarine	lowers cholesterol, fewer or no trans fats
fried chicken	baked chicken	less total fat, less saturated fat
bologna, salami, or pastrami	sliced turkey, lean ham, or low-fat sandwich meats	less total fat, less saturated fat
cookies with trans fat, hydrogenated oil, palm oil, or coconut oil	an orange, an apple, a pear, or some prunes	more fiber, no fat
pork chop	pork loin	less total fat, less saturated fat
short ribs	grilled or baked salmon or tuna, grilled T-bone steak	less total fat, less saturated fat

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