



Community Health Connections

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Fact Sheet

Heart Healthy Diet

A heart healthy diet consists of meals that are low in fat, low in cholesterol, low in sodium and high in fiber. Eating heart healthy foods will reduce risk factors of heart disease, lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure and aid in maintaining a healthy weight.

General Guidelines to follow

- Reduce cholesterol to less than 300 mg per day
- Those at high risk of heart disease should reduce cholesterol to less than 200 mg per day
- Reduce saturated fat to less than 10% of total daily calories
- Limit total fat intake to less than 30% of total daily calories
- Reduce salt intake to 1500 to 2500 mg of sodium per day (1tsp of salt = approx 2300mg)
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, multi-grain breads, and cereals
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise per physician's recommendations

Healthy tips for reducing fat and cholesterol

- Limit fatty meats such as bacon, sausage, regular ground meat, and steaks
- Instead of luncheon meats, use turkey, chicken, lean meats, and tuna for sandwiches
- Choose nonfat or low-fat dairy products
- Limit intake of whole eggs to only two to three per week
- Use low fat salad dressings or lemon juice for salads
- Cook gravies, soups and casseroles a day ahead and refrigerate, then skim fat from top
- Use a rack when roasting meats or poultry so that the fat drains off of meat
- Broil, poach, bake or steam foods instead of frying
- Serve vegetables with herbs, spices and lemon juice or butter flavored substitutes
- Reduce oil in recipes (start with one-fourth less)

Sodium guidelines

- Important to read labels on all foods
- Do not add salt during cooking foods
- Omit foods high in sodium such as salty or smoked meats, and salty or smoked fish
- Avoid bouillon cubes, canned soups, and dried soup mixes and prepared sauces (soy, barbecue)
- Omit salted snacks such as potato chips, popcorn, party dips and spreads, pickles, bottled salad dressings
- Omit frozen dinners, instant cereal mixes, pot pies and fast foods

Adding fiber can help reduce cholesterol levels, promote weight, enhance good digestion and help as a natural laxative.

Foods high in fiber

- Raspberries, apples (with skin), strawberries, bananas, figs, pears
- Spaghetti (whole wheat), brown rice
- Bran flakes, oatmeal, oat bran muffin
- Split peas, lentils, baked beans, lima beans, black beans, kidney beans broccoli, artichoke

For additional information on Heart healthy diet, visit www.americanheart.org or contact us at 724-283-0990.