ANSWERS
by heart

Lifestyle + Risk Reduction
Diet + Nutrition

American
Heart
Association®
Learn and Live

How Do I Follow a Healthy Diet?

Healthy eating habits can help you reduce three risk factors for heart attack and stroke — high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight.

The picture on the right shows the basic food groups. Be sure to choose a variety of foods from each group and eat the number of servings we recommend.

Fiber-rich whole grains (6 to 8 servings per day)

- One serving equals: 1 slice bread; ½ cup hot cereal, 1 cup flaked cereal; or ½ cup cooked rice or pasta

- At least half of your servings should be fiber-rich whole grains. Select items like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain crackers and brown rice.

Vegetables (4 to 5 servings per day)

- One serving equals: 1 cup raw leafy vegetables; ½ cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetables; ½ cup vegetable juice.

- Eat a variety of colors and types, especially deeply colored vegetables, such as spinach, carrots, and broccoli.

Fruits (4 to 5 servings per day)

- One serving equals: 1 medium fruit (about the size of a baseball); ¼ cup dried fruit; ½ cup fresh; frozen, or canned fruit; ½ cup fruit juice.

- Eat a variety of colors and types, especially deeply colored fruits.

Lean meat, poultry, and fish (no more than 6 cooked ounces per day)

- A 3 oz. portion is about the size of a deck of playing cards, ½ of a chicken breast or ¾ cup of flaked fish.

- Enjoy at least 2 servings of baked or grilled fish each week; especially fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon, trout, and herring.

- Trim fat from meats; remove skin from poultry.

Nuts, seeds, and legumes (4 to 5 servings per week)

- One serving equals: $1/3$ cup or 1½ oz nuts; 2 Tbsp. peanut butter (no salt added); 2 Tbsp. or ½ oz seeds; ½ cup cooked legumes (dried beans or peas).

- Choose no salted added or low-sodium varieties.

Fat-free, 1 percent and low-fat milk products (2 to 3 servings per day)

- One serving equals: 1 cup milk or yogurt or 1½ oz. low sodium, fat-free or low-fat cheese.

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- Use only milk products with 0% to 1% fat. 2% milk is not low-fat.
- Have only fat-free or low-fat yogurt with no added sugars.
- Use dry-curd, fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese.
- Cheeses (low sodium, fat-free or low-fat) should have no more than
    - 3 grams of fat per oz. and no more than
    - 2 grams of saturated fat per oz.

Fats and oils (2 to 3 servings per day)

- One serving equals: 1 tsp. vegetable oil or soft margarine, 2 tsp. diet margarine, 1 Tbsp. regular salad dressing, or 1 Tbsp. regular mayonnaise. Choose no salted added or low-sodium varieties.
- Choose fats and oils with 2 grams or less saturated fat per tablespoon, such as liquid and tub margarines, and canola, corn, safflower, soy bean and olive oils.
- Be sure to count the fats used in store-bought foods, in cooking and on vegetables and breads.

- Read food labels carefully and try to avoid "partially hydrogenated" oils and fats.

Sweets and added sugars (5 or less servings per week)

- One serving equals: 1 Tbsp. sugar; 1 Tbsp. jelly or jam; ½ cup sorbet, gelatin; 1 cup soda or fruit drink.
- Drink no more than 450 calories or 36 oz per week of sugar-sweetened beverages.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

1. **Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals.** If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.

2. Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** (1-800-242-8721), or visit **heart.org** to learn more about heart disease.

3. For information on stroke, call **1-888-4-STROKE** (1-888-478-7653) or visit us at **StrokeAssociation.org**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

What about desserts?

What's a good, healthful cookbook?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **heart.org/answersbyheart** to learn more.
Knowledge is power, so Learn and Live!

American Heart Association