



Patient & Family Guide
2019

Heart Healthy Eating Guide

Aussi disponible en français : *Guide
alimentaire pour un cœur en santé* (FF85-1953)



www.nshealth.ca

Heart Healthy Eating Guide

What is heart healthy eating?

Heart healthy eating includes an overall balance of whole, nutritious foods. These are foods that have not been highly processed or refined. This includes a variety of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, lean proteins, and plant-based proteins. Your eating has a large effect on both your heart and your overall health.

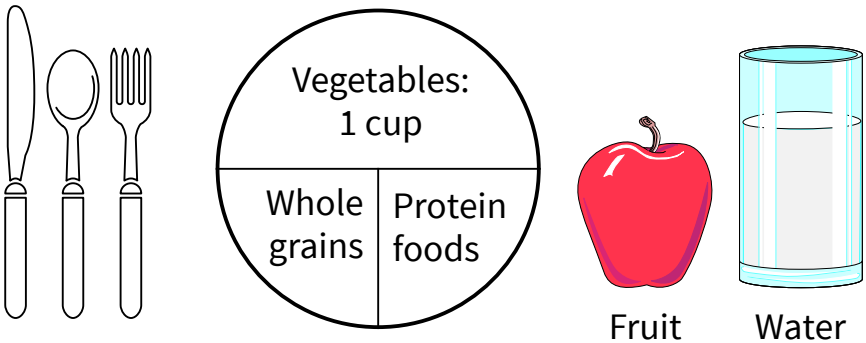
Healthy eating can help lower your risk of heart disease by

- › improving your cholesterol levels
- › lowering your blood pressure
- › managing your body weight
- › controlling your blood glucose (sugar)

What can I do to eat heart healthy?

- Prepare meals at home using fresh, whole foods
 - › Eat fewer processed foods. Nutrients we need to maintain good health can be lost through processing. Choose whole foods to get the most nutrition and least additives. Processed foods often contain added sugar, salt, and fat.
- Eat when you are hungry
 - › People eat for many reasons other than hunger. Listen to your body and try to only eat when you have a physical need for food.

- › Eat slowly and enjoy your food. Pay attention to the look, smell, and taste of your food. Limit distractions when you are eating (for example, put your phone down, turn off the TV).
- › If you are used to skipping meals, you may need to start including regular meals to reset your hunger cues.
- Fill half your plate with vegetables
 - › Eating more vegetables lowers blood pressure and helps keep portions small.
- Choose foods higher in fibre
- Balance your meals to keep you satisfied longer
 - › Make sure that each meal has a source of protein and a source of fibre.



- Use less sugar, salt, and fat when making meals
 - › Use herbs and spices instead of salt when cooking.
 - › Enjoy vegetables and fruit without added salt and sugar. Drain and rinse canned vegetables and fruit.

- › Use smaller amounts of condiments (e.g. ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, mayonnaise, butter, margarine). Learn to enjoy the taste of whole foods.
- Choose fatty fish twice a week
 - › Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines, and trout) are sources of omega 3 fatty acids.
- Drink water when you are thirsty
 - › Avoid beverages with added sugars (pop, juice, sports drinks, chocolate milk, energy drinks).

Other things that can affect your food choices include:

- Sleep
 - › Research has shown that sleep has a large impact on health. Not getting enough sleep can affect the hormones that control hunger and stimulate appetite.
 - › Try to go to bed and get up at about the same time every day.
 - › Sleep in a dark, cool environment.
 - › Limit screen time (TV, phone, etc.) in the hour before bed.
- Stress
 - › Stress triggers hormones that cause hunger and can lead to mindless or emotional eating (using food as a comfort). Stress has many other negative effects on health. Stress cannot always be decreased or avoided, but we can learn to manage it.

These resources may help with managing stress:

- Canadian Mental Health Association
 - › www.cmha.ca
 - › Click on the “Mental Health” icon and select “Your Mental Health” from the drop-down menu. Click on “What’s Your Stress Index?”
- Health Canada: Mental Health — Coping With Stress
 - › www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/healthy-living/your-health/lifestyles/your-health-mental-health-coping-stress-health-canada-2008.html
- Heart and Stroke
 - › www.heartandstroke.ca
 - › See information on stress management under “Get Healthy” and “Reduce Stress”
- Help Guide
 - › www.helpguide.org
 - › Useful management strategies for dealing with emotional stress. Select stress from the “Mental Health” drop-down menu
- International Stress Management Association of the United Kingdom
 - › www.isma.org.uk

Sodium (salt)

Salt is the main source of sodium in our food. Eating too much sodium can increase blood pressure and your risk of stroke and kidney disease. Try to limit sodium to no more than 2000 mg a day (1 tsp of salt = 2300 mg of sodium).

*Note: Sea salt and pink Himalayan salt have the same amount of sodium as table salt.

Tips to help limit your salt intake

- Prepare your meals at home from whole, natural foods
- Buy unprocessed fresh and frozen foods, when possible
- Replace salt with herbs and spices when cooking
- Choose whole vegetables instead of vegetable juices
- Take the salt shaker off the table
- Check food labels for sodium
 - › Low sodium = 5% DV or less per serving
 - › Look for no salt added canned products
 - › “Low sodium” and “reduced sodium” do not mean the same thing on food labels
- Drain and rinse salted canned products

Fibre

Fibre is only found in plant-based foods. There are 2 types of fibre: soluble and insoluble. It is important to eat a variety of plant-based foods to include both sources of fibre.

Soluble fibre

Soluble fibre directly lowers cholesterol levels. It also helps with blood sugar control and managing diarrhea. When water is added to a food, the soluble fibre thickens and forms a gel. For example, adding water to oats gives them a gummy texture.

- Sources of soluble fibre:
 - › pulses (beans, lentils, and chickpeas)
 - › oats
 - › psyllium
 - › ground flaxseed and chia seeds
 - › some fruits (e.g. berries, applesauce)

Insoluble fibre

Insoluble fibre helps you feel full and satisfied and keeps bowel movements regular. We sometimes call this “roughage.”

- Sources of insoluble fibre:
 - › vegetables and fruit
(especially skins and seeds)
 - › whole grains
 - › bran (wheat and oat)
 - › nuts and seeds

Tips to help you eat more fibre

- Eat more vegetables and fruit.
- Choose higher fibre cereals like oatmeal or shredded wheat more often.
- Add beans, lentils, and chickpeas to homemade soups and casseroles.
- Try roasted chickpeas or steamed edamame for an easy snack.
- Read food labels for fibre content and aim for higher amounts (at least 5% DV per serving).
- Choose a variety of high fibre foods to get both soluble and insoluble fibre.
- Choose whole grains more often instead of refined (white) options (check the ingredient list for the words “whole grain”).
- Add 1–2 tablespoons of wheat bran, oat bran, psyllium, chia seeds, or ground flaxseed to your cereal or yogurt.
- Eat whole vegetables and fruit instead of drinking juice.
- Add nuts and seeds to salads and cereals.

Note: Increase fibre gradually to avoid gas, bloating, or cramping and make sure you are drinking lots of water (try for about 2 litres per day).

Vegetables and fruit

Eating vegetables and fruit can lower your risk of many diseases, including heart disease and cancer. Vegetables and fruit provide vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fibre that your body needs for good health. Including vegetables and/or fruit at every meal and snack will help you get the amount you need each day.

Tips to help you eat more vegetables and fruit

- Include more whole vegetables and fruit instead of juice.
- Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no fat, sugar, or salt.
- Aim to fill half your plate with vegetables at each meal.
- Choose a variety of colours.
 - › Choose orange and dark green vegetables often (such as carrots, broccoli, kale, and squash).
- Choose more vegetables than fruit throughout the day.

Sugar

Sugar gives our body energy. It is naturally found in some foods and beverages (like lactose in milk and fructose in fruit) or added into foods and beverages (like sucrose in cookies and high fructose corn syrup in pop).

We receive enough sugar naturally in foods that we do not need added sugar. An eating pattern high in added sugar is linked to heart disease, stroke, obesity, high cholesterol, cancer, and cavities in your teeth.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends limiting added sugars to 6 or less teaspoons per day (1 teaspoon of sugar = 4 grams). Added sugars include sugar, honey, and molasses added to foods and beverages. Juice also counts as an added sugar.

Tips to help you eat less sugar

- Eat whole, natural foods.
- Read food labels to identify and avoid foods with added sugars. Food manufacturers may use different names for sugar to list them further down on the ingredient list.
- Drink water instead of sweetened beverages such as sports drinks, energy drinks, pop, chocolate milk, and juice.

Most of the foods we eat contain carbohydrates (nutrients that break down into sugar in our bodies). Fruit, starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn), grains (cereals, bread, rice, pasta), milk and yogurt all naturally contain carbohydrates. Although carbohydrates are an important energy source for our bodies, it is important to watch portion sizes and make them part of a balanced meal. Ask your dietitian for info on portion sizes.

Alcohol

A high intake of alcohol can increase your blood pressure, weight, and triglycerides.

We recommend following Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines. Visit www.ccsa.ca for more info.

- Women
 - › No more than 2 drinks a day (most days), to a weekly maximum of 10 drinks
 - › At least 1 or 2 days each week when no alcohol is consumed
- Men
 - › No more than 3 drinks a day (most days), to a weekly maximum of 15 drinks
 - › At least 1 or 2 days each week when no alcohol is consumed

Remember:

One drink = 341 ml (12 oz) of beer/cider/cooler

OR 142 ml (5 oz) wine

OR 43 ml (1.5 oz) distilled alcohol
(e.g. rum, gin, vodka)

Fat

Our bodies need fat to help absorb vitamins, but fat is also high in calories. Choosing whole, natural foods is the best way to avoid eating too much fat.

Type of fat	Where is it found?
Unsaturated <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comes from plant-based sources and fish• Good for your heart and blood vessels• Liquid at room temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nuts and seeds• Avocados• Fish• Oils (olive, canola, avocado)
Omega 3 fatty acids <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type of unsaturated fat• Essential fat that our bodies cannot make• Linked with a reduced risk of heart disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fatty fish (salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, herring)• Oils (canola, soy, flax)• Nuts and seeds (walnuts, ground flaxseeds, chia seeds)• Omega 3 eggs• Legumes (soybeans and soy products)

Type of fat	Where is it found?
<p>Saturated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonly found in processed and fried foods • Also occurs naturally in animal products and some plant-based oils • Known to raise bad (LDL) cholesterol • Solid at room temperature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processed meats (salami, bologna, hot dogs, sausages, pepperoni) • Full fat dairy products (cream, butter, whole milk) • Oils (coconut, palm) • High fat meats (lard, meat with visible fat, poultry with skin)
<p>Trans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man-made through a process called hydrogenation • Used in processed foods to increase shelf life • Known to have a negative effect on heart health • Solid at room temperature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortening • Hard, block margarine • Store-bought baked goods (donuts, cookies, cakes, muffins, crackers) • Fast food • Any food that has the words “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” in the ingredient list

How to read a food label

Serving size

- The amount of nutrients listed is based on this amount. Compare this amount to the amount you actually eat. Look for the same serving sizes to compare similar foods.

Note: The serving size is not necessarily the amount of food you should eat.

Calories

- The calories are based on the serving size. Calories are the amount of energy in food. If you eat more calories than you need, you may gain weight.

% Daily Value (DV)

- Tells you if there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in one serving. 5% or less is considered a little, 15% or more is considered a lot.

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 cup (228 g) / par 1 tasse (228 g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Portions par contenant 2	
Amount	%Daily Value
Teneur	%valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 250	
Fat / Lipides 12 g	18 %
Saturated / saturés 3 g	
+ Trans / trans 3 g	30 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 30 mg	10 %
Sodium / Sodium 470 mg	20 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 31 g	10 %
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 5 g	
Protein / Protéines 5 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	4 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	2 %
Calcium / Calcium	20 %
Iron / Fer	4 %

Fat

- Look at the amount of fat. Total fat content includes unsaturated, saturated, and trans fats. Aim for zero trans fat, as it is unhealthy and should be avoided.

Sodium

- Avoid high sodium foods (15% Daily Value or more). Aim for lower sodium foods (5% DV or less).

Fibre

- Choose foods with at least 5% DV fibre per serving.

Sugar

- Aim for lower amounts, including natural and added sugars. Read the ingredient list for words that mean sugar.
- Remember: 4 g = 1 teaspoon of sugar.

What should I look for on the ingredient list?

Ingredients are listed by weight. This means that foods contain more of the ingredients found at the beginning of the list and less of the ingredients towards the end of the list.

Sugar, sodium, and fat may appear in the ingredient list under different names. Check out: www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/understanding-food-labels/ingredient-list.html

The ingredient list can help you check if a food has a certain ingredient and avoid ingredients in case of allergies or intolerance.

Tip: Remember the words “hydrogenated” and “partially hydrogenated” mean that there are trans fats in the product.

For more information, visit these websites:

- Cookspiration® for recipe ideas
 - › www.cookspiration.com
- Diabetes Canada – info on diabetes, resources, webinars, recipes
 - › www.diabetes.ca
- Dietitians of Canada – general nutrition info, how to access a dietitian, recipes
 - › www.dietitians.ca
- Health Canada – general nutrition information
 - › www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html
- Healthy Albertans – healthy eating resources and recipes
 - › www.alberta.ca/healthy-living-resources.aspx
- Healthy Families British Columbia – general nutrition information
 - › www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/eating
- Heart and Stroke Foundation – info on heart disease and recipes
 - › www.heartandstroke.com
- Look under ‘Location & contact information’ on the NSHA Nutrition Education and Counselling (Dietitians) page to contact a dietitian with your nutrition questions
 - › www.nshealth.ca/content/nutrition-education-and-counselling-dietitians
- UnlockFood.ca – general nutrition information
 - › www.unlockfood.ca

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

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www.nshealth.ca

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.