

Heart Health

Tips for Healthy Living



*All information derived from American Heart Association web site

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Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations

A healthy diet and lifestyle are your best weapons to fight cardiovascular disease. It's not as hard as you may think! Remember, it's the overall pattern of your choices that counts.

Make the simple steps based below part of your life for long-term benefits to your health and your heart.

Use up at least as many calories as you take in.

Start by knowing how many calories you should be eating and drinking to maintain your weight. Don't eat more calories than you know you can burn up every day. Increase the amount and intensity of your physical activity to match the number of calories you take in. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week or – best of all – at least 30 minutes every day. Regular physical activity can help you maintain your weight, keep off weight that you lose and help you reach physical and cardiovascular fitness. If you can't do at least 30 minutes at one time, you can add up 10-minute sessions throughout the day.

Eat a variety of nutritious foods from all the food groups.

You may be eating plenty of food, but your body may not be getting the nutrients it needs to be healthy. Nutrient-rich foods have vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients but are lower in calories. To get the nutrients you need, choose foods like vegetables, fruits, whole-grain products and fat-free or low-fat dairy products most often.

- Vegetables and fruits are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber – and they're low in calories. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables may help you control your weight and your blood pressure.
- Unrefined whole-grain foods contain fiber that can help lower your blood cholesterol and help you feel full, which may help you manage your weight.
- Eat fish at least twice a week. Recent research shows that eating oily fish containing omega-3 fatty acids (for example, salmon, trout, and herring) may help lower your risk of death from coronary artery disease.

Eat less of the nutrient-poor foods

The right number of calories to eat each day is based on your age and physical activity level whether you're trying to gain, lose or maintain your weight. You could use your daily allotment of calories on a few high-calorie foods and beverages, but you probably wouldn't get the nutrients your body needs to be healthy. Limit foods and beverages high in calories but low in nutrients, and limit how much saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol and sodium. Read labels carefully – the Nutrition Facts panel will tell you how much of those nutrients each food or beverage contains.

Food	1600 (calories)	2000 (calories)	Sample Serving Sizes
Lean meats, poultry, and seafood	3-6 oz (cooked) per day	Less than 6 oz /day	-3 oz cooked meat is about the size of a computer mouse -3 oz grilled fish is about the size of a checkbook
Fats and oils	2 servings per day	2-3 servings per day	- 1 tsp soft margarine -1 Tbsp mayonnaise -1 tsp vegetable oil -1 Tbsp regular or 2 Tbsp low-fat salad dressing (fat-free dressing does not count as a serving)
Use liquid vegetable oil and soft margarines most often			
Nuts, seeds, and legumes	3-4 servings	4-5 servings	1/3 C or 1½ oz nuts 2 Tbsp peanut butter 2 Tbsp or ½ oz seeds ½ C dry beans or peas
Sweets and added sugars	0 servings week	5 or fewer servings/wk	-1 Tbsp sugar -1Tbsp jelly or jam ½ C sorbet and ices 1 C lemonade

¹ Sedentary means you have a lifestyle that includes only the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

² Moderately active means you have a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking about 1.5-3 mi. per day at 3-4 mph, in addition to the light physical activity associated with day-to-day life.

³ Active means you have a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking more than 3 mi per day at 3-4 mph, in addition to the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

Eat a Wide Variety of Foods

This chart shows the suggested number of servings from each food group based on a daily intake of 16-2000 calories. There is a right number of calories for you, depending on your age, physical activity level and whether you are trying to lose, gain or maintain your weight. If you need fewer calories than shown below, decrease the number of servings and increase the servings if you need more calories.

Food	1600 (calories)	2000 (calories)	Sample Serving Sizes
Grains At least ½ of your servings should be whole-grain	6 servings	6-8 servings	-1 slice bread -1 oz dry cereal (check nutrition label for cup measurements of different products) -½ C cooked rice, pasta or cereal (about the size of a baseball)
Vegetables	3-4 servings	4-5 servings	-1 C raw leafy vegetables (about the size of a small fist) -½ C cut-up raw or cooked vegetables -½ C vegetable juice
Fruits Eat a variety of colors and types	4 servings	4-5 servings	-1 medium fruit (about the size of a baseball) -¼ C dried fruit -½ C fresh, frozen, or canned fruit ½ C fruit juice
Fat-free or low-fat dairy products	2-3 servings	2-3 servings	-1 C fat-free or low-fat milk -1 C fat-free or low-fat yogurt -1½ oz fat-free or low-fat cheese (about the size of 6 stacked dice)

As you make daily food choices, base your eating pattern on these recommendations:

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.
- Select fat-free, 1 % fat and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Aim to eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day.
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. That means 1 drink per day if you're a woman and 2 drinks per day if you're a man.

Follow the American Heart Association recommendations when you eat out, and keep an eye on your portion sizes.

Also, don't smoke tobacco-and stay away from tobacco smoke.

Be Physically Active

Being active brings many benefits for your heart and your health. Regular physical activity can help you improve your blood pressure and blood sugar levels and reduce your risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, depression and breast and colon cancer

How much activity do you need? Aim to get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most, if not all days of the week. If you are trying to lose weight, aim for 30 to 60 minutes on most days.

- One way to live a more active lifestyle is to incorporate as much physical movement into your usual daily activities as you can. For example, decide to take the stairs instead of riding the elevator. It may sound simple, but small steps do add up. Instead of finding ways to avoid the physical aspects of daily tasks, try to improve your fitness by doing more, not less.
- Keep a written log of your physical activity to help you figure out how much exercise you get versus how much you need.
- Track and cut down on your "screen" time, including watching television, surfing the Web, and playing computer games.

Being physically active can boost your ability to make other lifestyle improvements as well. You'll feel more confident, have more energy, and serve as a good role model for your family and friends.

Use this table to estimate how many calories you can burn in 30 minutes of continuous activity. Your current weight will affect the number of calories burned.

Calories Used in 30 Minutes by Activity and Weight

	150#	200#
Playing basketball	282	376
Bicycling	163	217
Gardening	195	260
Hiking	204	272
Jogging at 5 mph	270	360
Mowing with light push mower	135	180
Playing tennis (singles)	234	310
Walking at 1 mph	68	90
Walking at 5 mph	225	300

Eat Less of the Nutrient-Poor Foods

It's not a good idea to use your daily allotment of calories on a few high-calorie foods and beverages that don't provide the nutrients your body needs. Follow these recommendations as you develop an overall healthy eating plan.

Limit how much saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol you eat. These fats are usually found in meat and dairy foods and products that are commercially baked and fried. Cutting back on these foods can reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease by lowering "bad" LDL cholesterol in your blood.

Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.

- Cuts of red meat and pork labeled 'loin' and 'round' usually have the least amount of fat.
- Remove all visible fat from meat and poultry before cooking.
- Remove skin from poultry before eating.
- Choose white meat most often when eating poultry.
- Grill, bake or broil meats and poultry.
- Cut back on processed meats that are high in saturated fat and sodium.

Select fat-free, 1% fat and low-fat dairy products.

- Minimize your intake of whole-fat dairy products such as butter and whole milk or full-fat dairy products (yogurt, cheeses).
- If you drink whole or 2% milk, or use full-fat dairy products, gradually switch to fat-free, low-fat or reduced-fat dairy products.

Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.

- Use liquid vegetable oils and soft margarines in place of hard margarine or shortening.
- Limit cakes, cookies, crackers, pastries, pies, muffins, doughnuts and French fries made with partially hydrogenated or saturated fats.

Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol.

- Try to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- Some commonly eaten cholesterol-containing foods include eggs (about 200 mg/yolk), shellfish (50-100 mg/cup), "organ" meats such as liver (375 mg/3 oz), and whole milk (30 mg/cup).

Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars. Many snack foods and beverages have added sugar. Cut back on added sugars to lower your total calorie intake. These foods tend to be low in vitamins and minerals and the calories add up quickly. Also, drinking calorie-containing beverages may not make you feel full. This could tempt you to eat and drink more than you need and gain weight.

- Examples of added sugars are sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, dextrose, corn syrups, high-fructose corn syrup, concentrated fruit juice and honey.
- Read the ingredient list. Choose items that don't have added sugars in their first four listed ingredients.

Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Foods low in salt lower your risk for high blood pressure and may help you control it.

- Compare the sodium content of similar products (for example, different brands of tomato sauce) and choose the products with less sodium.
- Choose frozen foods, soups, cereals, baked goods and other processed foods that are labeled "reduced-sodium."
- Limit high-sodium condiments and foods such as soy sauce, steak sauce, Worcestershire sauce, flavored seasonings salts, pickles and olives.
- Replace salt w/herbs and spices or some of the salt-free seasoning mixes. Use lemon juice, citrus zest or hot chilies to add flavor.
- Try rinsing certain foods, such as canned tuna and salmon, feta cheese and capers, to remove some of the sodium.
- Aim to eat less than 2300 mg of salt per day. Some people – African Americans, middle-aged and older adults, and people with high blood pressure – need less than 1500 mg per day.

Know How Many Calories You Should Eat

To avoid gaining weight over time, you should aim to burn up as many calories through basic metabolic function and physical activity as you take in. To know whether you're on track, you need to be able to estimate how many calories you need based on your age, gender and level of physical activity. The calorie ranges shown in this table allow for the needs of people of different ages within an age group. Adults need fewer calories at older ages. For example, an active 31-year-old man needs only about 2,800 calories.

Activity Level and Estimated Calories Burned

Gender/Age	Sedentary ¹	Mod Active ²	Active ³
Female 19-30	2000	20-2200	2400
31-50	1800	2000	2200
51+	1600	1800	20-2200
Male 19-30	2400	26-2800	3000
31-50	2200	24-2600	28-3000
51+	2000	22-2400	24-2800