

New Year – New Food Choices

Tips for choosing & preparing the right foods for heart health

It's the New Year, and many of us are trying to refocus our efforts for better health, so let's get practical with these efforts. The goal of this issue of *HealthHints* is simply to give you practical tips on how to choose and prepare foods that will help you substitute *good* fats for *bad* ones and make healthy choices for overall heart health.

Fats & Cholesterol

When trying to alter your diet for better health, first try focusing on cutting fats. Doing so can give you a concrete goal with which to start. Don't just cut *total* fat though; recent research reports the need to look at the type of fat we eat.¹ We need to substitute *good* fats (unsaturated) for *bad* fats (trans and saturated). All fats, however,

should be eaten in moderation. Eating too much *bad* fat is one of the major risk factors for heart disease. Eating large amounts of polyunsaturated fat, however, may increase the risk for some types of cancer.²

While it is important to *limit* fat in your diet, don't try to cut it out completely, as some fat is needed for your body to function properly. Focus on reducing foods high in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol; select more foods made with unsaturated fats³ (called polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats). The following tips can also help:

- Choose foods naturally low in saturated fat, which are often low in cholesterol and trans fat, too. These foods include a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, high-fiber, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and lean cuts of meat.^{2,4,5} (See more details in the sections below on meats, dairy, and fiber.)
- Choose lean, protein-rich foods such as soy, fish, skinless chicken, very lean meat, and fat free or 1 percent dairy products.
- Select lean cuts of meat, and trim off all visible fat before cooking.⁶
- Serve moderate portions, and try "low-meat" dishes featuring pasta, rice, beans, and/or vegetables.

- Limit commercially fried foods, processed foods, and commercially prepared baked goods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Not only are these foods very high in fat, but that fat is also likely to be very hydrogenated, meaning a lot of trans fat. Eat fried fast food infrequently. French fries, doughnuts, cookies, crackers, muffins, pastries, pies, and cakes are examples of foods that are high in trans fat. Don't eat them often.^{2,5}
- If you must eat processed foods, look for foods made with unhydrogenated oil rather than partially hydrogenated or hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fat.⁵
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol (limit most animal products, such as egg yolks, cheeses, whole milk, cream, ice cream, fatty meats, and large portions of meats).² Try to eat less than 300 mg of dietary cholesterol each day. Some commonly eaten cholesterol-containing foods include whole eggs (about 200 mg per yolk), shellfish (50 to 100 mg per ½ cup), "organ" meats such as liver (375 mg per 3 oz), and whole milk (30 mg per cup). Egg whites don't contain cholesterol and are good protein sources, so they're fine.



In fact, you **can substitute two egg whites for each egg yolk** in many recipes that call for eggs.⁷

- Use cooking methods that require little or no fat — boil, broil, bake, roast, poach, steam, saute, stir-fry, or microwave.⁶
- Replace saturated fats with healthier substitutes. Use liquid vegetable oils and soft margarines in place of hard margarine or shortening. Use naturally occurring, unhydrogenated liquid vegetable oils such as canola, safflower, sunflower, or olive oil most often.^{5,7} Use soft margarine as a substitute for butter, and choose soft margarines (liquid or tub varieties) over harder stick forms. Look for “0 g trans fat” on the Nutrition Facts label.⁵
- When your own recipe calls for butter, lard, bacon, bacon fat, or chicken fat, use margarine that contains no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per 1 tablespoon or use unsaturated vegetable oil.⁶

Note: *Children under age 2 should NOT be on a fat-restricted diet because cholesterol and fat are thought to be important nutrients for brain development.*²

Meats

Avoid fatty meat and poultry with the skin.⁴ “Choose lean meats and poultry without skin, and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.”⁷ “Most meats have about the same amount of cholesterol, roughly 70 milligrams in each three-ounce cooked serving (about the size of a deck of cards). The American Heart Association recommends eating no more than six ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, fish, or seafood a day.”⁷ Learn to choose the healthiest cuts of meat, and try these tips at home:

- The leanest beef cuts usually include sirloin, chuck, loin, and round. Choose “choice” or “select” grades rather than “prime.” Select lean or extra lean ground meats.
- Lean pork cuts include tenderloin or loin chops.
- The leanest lamb cuts come from the leg, arm, and loin.
- Remove all visible fat from meat and poultry before cooking.
- Remove skin from poultry before eating.
- Choose white meat most often when eating poultry.
- Duck and goose are higher in fat than chicken and turkey.
- Grill, bake, or broil meats and poultry.
- Organ meats – such as liver, sweetbread, kidneys, and brains – are very high in cholesterol.
- Cut back on processed meats that are high in saturated fat and sodium.⁷



Fish

Guidelines suggest eating at least two servings of fish each week. Fish can be fatty or lean, but it's still low in saturated fat. Try replacing two servings of red meat or poultry each week with two servings of fish.

- Eat oily fish containing omega-3 fatty acids (for example, salmon, trout, and herring), which may help lower your risk of death from coronary artery disease.
- Prepare fish baked, broiled, grilled, or boiled rather than breaded and fried.⁷
- See [Which Foods to Choose](#) for more information about the health benefits of fish and omega-3 fatty acids.

Dairy

Minimize your intake of whole-fat dairy products

- Select fat-free, 1 percent fat, and low-fat dairy products.
- Minimize whole-fat products such as butter and whole milk or 2 percent full-fat dairy products (yogurt, cheeses).
- If you drink whole or 2 percent milk or use full-fat dairy products, gradually switch to fat-free, low-fat, or reduced-fat dairy products.

Meat – Cooking Tips

Even lean meat has fat in it. Here are some ways the American Heart Association suggests to reduce the saturated fat in meat:

- Broil rather than pan-fry meats such as hamburger, lamb chops, pork chops, and steak.
- Use a rack to drain off fat when broiling, roasting, or baking. Instead of basting with drippings, keep meat moist with wine, fruit juices, or an acceptable oil-based marinade.
- Cook a day ahead of time. Stews, boiled meat, soup stock, or other dishes in which fat cooks into the liquid can be refrigerated. Then the hardened fat can be removed from the top.
- Make gravies after the fat has hardened and can be removed from the liquid.
- When a recipe calls for browning the meat first, try browning it under the broiler instead of in a pan.⁶

- Look for fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese, part-skim milk mozzarella, ricotta, and other fat-free or low-fat cheeses.⁷

Fiber

“Fiber is classified as either soluble or insoluble. When regularly eaten as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, soluble fiber has been shown to help lower blood cholesterol and may also help reduce the risk of diabetes and colon and rectal cancer. The American Heart Association recommends that you eat at least 25–30 grams of dietary fiber – in both soluble and insoluble forms – every day. The more calories you require to meet your daily needs, the more dietary fiber you need. Try to eat at least 14 grams of fiber per 1,000 calories you consume.”⁷

- Foods high in soluble fiber include oat bran, oatmeal, beans, peas, rice bran, barley, citrus fruits, strawberries, and apple pulp.
- Foods high in insoluble fiber include whole-wheat breads, wheat cereals, wheat bran, cabbage, beets, carrots, Brussels sprouts, turnips, cauliflower, and apple skin.
- Replace low-fiber foods (white bread, white rice, candy, and chips) with fiber-containing foods (whole-grain bread, brown rice, fruits, and vegetables).
- Try to eat more raw vegetables and fresh fruit, including the skins when appropriate. Cooking vegetables can reduce their fiber content, and skins are a good source of fiber.
- Eat high-fiber foods at every meal. Bran cereal for breakfast is a good start, but try to include some fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, and beans in your diet, too.

Whole Grain Help

Adding whole grains to your diet is a great way to increase your fiber, but exactly [what are whole grains](#), and how can we identify them when selecting foods? Whole grains, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) definition, are “foods made from the entire grain seed, usually called the kernel, which consists of the bran, germ, and endosperm. If the kernel has been cracked, crushed, or flaked, it must retain nearly the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain in order to be called whole grain.”⁸

Whole grain foods are “not processed much, so they keep most of their nutrients. At least half the grains you eat should be whole grains.”⁹ “As grains are processed (refined), they lose fiber and nutrients. White grains are often refined. This means white bread, white rice, and flour tortillas are not as healthy as whole-grain versions, such as whole-wheat bread, brown rice, or whole-grain tortillas.”⁹

It is important to check the food’s Nutrition Facts label to see if the grains in your foods are whole or refined. Claims on food packaging can be misleading. “Even if a package says the food is a whole-grain product, check the ingredients.”⁹ Unless a whole grain is listed first, the food might not be as healthy as the package makes it sound. “Here’s a hint: Wheat bread isn’t a whole grain. Whole-wheat bread is. Make sure to read the fine print!”⁹

Any bread or breakfast cereal that lists a whole grain (such as whole wheat or whole rolled oats) as the first ingredient is a good choice. “Ingredients are listed from most to least, so if a whole grain is first, you know the food has a lot of it.”⁹ Be aware, however, that added fat and sugar, like in sugar cereals, make grains less healthy.⁹ Other foods made with whole grains, such as oatmeal, barley soup, wild rice pilaf, and buckwheat noodles are also good choices.⁹

To learn more about whole grains and how to add more to your diet, see the following resources:

- [Whole Grains: Hearty Options for a Healthy Diet](#)
- [Healthful Whole Grains](#)
- [What Foods Are in the Grain Group?](#)
- [White Whole-Wheat Bread: Is It Good for Me?](#)
- [Whole Grains Council: Recipes.](#)



- Be sure to increase your fiber intake gradually, giving your body time to adjust, and drink at least six to eight 8-oz. glasses of fluids a day.⁷
- Note:** Read the Nutrition Facts label on all packaged foods that claim to contain oat bran or wheat bran. Many of these products actually contain very little fiber and may also be high in sodium, calories, and saturated or trans fat.⁷

Sodium

“Most of us eat much more sodium than we need. In some people, this can lead to high blood pressure, which increases the risk of stroke, heart disease, and kidney disease.”⁶ Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt to lower your sodium intake. “Foods low in salt lower your risk for high blood pressure and may help you control it.”⁷ Try to



consume less than 2,400 mg of salt or sodium per day (about 1 teaspoon of salt). “Some people – including African Americans, middle-aged and older adults, and people with high blood pressure – should have less than 1,500 mg per day.”⁷ Most of the sodium in our diets is added either during processing, while preparing food, or at the table (with table salt). To help reduce sodium in your diet:

- Use less salt or no salt at the table and in cooking.
- Use herbs and spices or some of the salt-free seasoning mixes in place of salt. Use lemon juice, citrus zest, or hot chiles to add flavor.
- Read the labels of all foods carefully. Even bakery products and cereals can be major sources of sodium in the diet.⁶
- 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 seasoning salts, pickles, and olives.
- Limit your intake of foods high in added sodium, such as:
 - canned and dried soups,
 - canned vegetables,
 - ketchup and mustard,
 - salty snack foods,
 - olives and pickles,
 - luncheon meats and cold cuts,
 - bacon and other cured meats,
 - cheeses, and
 - restaurant and carry-out foods (such as French fries, onion rings, hamburgers).
- To reduce the salt in canned vegetables, drain the liquid; then rinse the vegetables in water before eating.
- Try rinsing other high sodium foods, such as canned tuna and salmon, feta cheese and capers, to remove some of the sodium.⁷
- Look for “unsalted” varieties of the canned foods and snack foods listed above. Some foods may be labeled “no salt” or “without added salt.”
- Ask restaurants not to add salt to your order.

Sugar

When it comes to cutting back on calories, we often need to look at sugars. “Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars. Many snack foods and beverages have added sugars. Cut back on added sugars to lower your total calorie intake and help control your weight. These foods also tend

to be low in vitamins and minerals, and the calories add up quickly.”⁷

- 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**.⁷
- Limit calorie-containing beverages that may not make you feel full. “This could tempt you to eat and drink more than you need and gain weight.”⁷

Making it Personal

Now is the time to make a personal plan. You can start by using heart-healthy dietary guidelines to find out what your numbers of calories and fats grams should be. (See the December issue of [HealthHints](#) on how to use dietary guidelines to cut fats and cholesterol in your diet and the handout [Making Sense of the Guidelines-Finding Your Numbers](#).)

Then learn to read food labels to make healthy, personal choices. Finally, start making modifications to your diet using the tips above as well as the information found in the following handouts and websites:

- [Which Foods to Choose: Oats, bran, nuts, fish, butter, eggs, soy?](#)
- [Quick Tips: Healthy Food Choices at-a-Glance](#).
- [Eating Out](#)
- [MyPyramid](#)
- [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)

To view the references used in this newsletter, go to:
<http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/healthhints/2008/jan/ref.php>

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Which Foods to Choose?

Oats, bran, nuts, fish, butter, eggs, soy?

Can a handful of nuts, a bowl of oatmeal, or a soy shake help with your health? If cutting out bad fats isn't enough to reduce your cholesterol, you may want to try adding soluble fiber, nuts, and fish to your diet.¹ If you need more boost from your foods, adding foods fortified with plant sterols¹ can be an option for those with high cholesterol or at high risk for heart disease. (**Note:** Talk with your doctor about this option, and only add food sources with plant sterols to your diet when recommended by your doctor.) With a few tweaks to your diet, knowing which foods to choose can help stave off cholesterol problems¹ and heart disease. Here is some of the latest information from the Mayo Clinic on the health benefits of some foods you might choose.

Oatmeal and oat bran



"Oatmeal contains soluble fiber, which reduces your low-density lipoprotein (LDL) – the "bad" cholesterol. Soluble fiber is also found in such foods as kidney beans, Brussel sprouts, apples, pears, psyllium, barley, and prunes."¹ (See [Food](#)

[Sources of Soluble Fiber](#) for more foods with fiber.)

"Soluble fiber appears to reduce the absorption of cholesterol in your intestines. Gel-like soluble fiber binds bile (which contains cholesterol) and dietary cholesterol so that the body excretes it.

Five to 10 grams of soluble fiber a day decreases LDL cholesterol by about 5 percent. Eating 1.5 cups of cooked oatmeal provides 4.5 grams of fiber — enough to lower your cholesterol. To mix it up a little, try oat bran or cold cereal made with oatmeal or oat bran."¹

Walnuts, almonds, and more

"Studies have shown that walnuts can significantly reduce blood cholesterol. Rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, walnuts also help keep blood vessels healthy and elastic. Almonds appear to have a similar effect, resulting in a marked improvement within just four weeks.



A cholesterol-lowering diet in which 20 percent of the calories come from walnuts may reduce LDL cholesterol by 12 percent. For a 1,200-calorie per day diet, a little less than 1/3 of a cup of walnuts is about 240 calories, or 20 percent of the total calories for the day."¹

Why Might Nuts & Omega-3s Help?

This excerpt from the Mayo Clinic explains why nuts and omega-3 fatty acids might benefit our health....

"It's not entirely clear, but it's thought that the unsaturated fats in nuts — both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats — lower bad cholesterol levels. Many nuts are also rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s are a healthy form of fatty acids that seem to help your heart by, among other things, preventing dangerous heart rhythms that can lead to heart attacks. Omega-3 fatty acids are also found in fish, but nuts are one of the best plant-based sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Nuts also have lots of arginine, which is a molecule that increases the production of nitric oxide in your body, which may in turn help improve the health of your artery walls and make them more flexible and less prone to blood clots. Other substances in nuts that could improve your heart health include Vitamin E and fiber."

“Almost every type of nut has a lot of nutrition packed into a tiny package.... Eating nuts instead of a less healthy snack can help you more easily follow a heart-healthy diet.” Though walnuts are the best studied nuts, “almonds, macadamia nuts, hazelnuts, and pecans are other nuts that appear to be quite heart healthy. Even peanuts, which are technically not a nut but a legume, seem to be relatively healthy. Keep in mind, you could end up canceling out the heart-healthy benefits of nuts if they’re covered with chocolate, sugar, or salt.”²

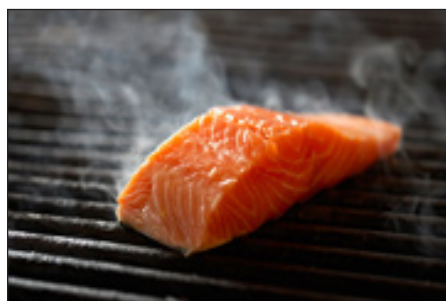
All nuts are high in calories (as much as 80 percent of a nut is fat), however; so a handful will suffice.^{1,2} “As with any food, good or bad, eating too much can cause weight gain, and being overweight places you at higher risk of heart disease. To avoid gaining weight, replace foods high in saturated fat with nuts. For example, instead of using cheese, luncheon meat, or croutons in your salad, add a handful of walnuts or almonds.”¹

Fish and omega-3 fatty acids

“Studies in the 1970s showed that Greenland Eskimos had a lower rate of heart disease than did other individuals living in Greenland at the same time. Analysis of dietary differences between the groups showed that the Eskimos ate less saturated fat and more omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and whale and seal meat.

Research since that time has supported the heart-healthy benefits of eating fish. If you can’t dine with the Eskimos, other good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include flaxseed, walnuts, canola oil, and soybean oil.

Omega-3 fatty acids are noted for their triglyceride-lowering effect, but they also help the heart in other ways such as reducing blood pressure and the risk of blood clots. In people who have already had heart attacks, fish oil—or omega-3 fatty acids—significantly reduces the risk of sudden death.



Doctors recommend eating at least two servings of fish a week. The highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids are in mackerel, lake trout, herring, sardines, albacore tuna, and salmon. However, to maintain the heart-healthy benefits of fish, bake or grill it.”¹

Butter or margarine?

“Margarine usually tops butter when it comes to heart health. Margarine is made from vegetable oils, so it contains no cholesterol. Margarine is also higher in “good” fats—polyunsaturated and monounsaturated—than butter is. These types of fat help reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad,” cholesterol, when substituted for saturated fat. Butter, on the other hand, is made from animal fat, so it contains cholesterol and high levels of saturated fat.



But not all margarines are created equal, and some may even be worse than butter. Most margarines are processed using a method called hydrogenation, which adds unhealthy trans fats. In general, the more solid the margarine, the more trans fats it contains—so stick margarines usually have more trans fats than do tub margarines. Like saturated fats, trans fats increase blood cholesterol and the risk of heart disease. In addition, trans fats can lower high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or ‘good,’ cholesterol levels.

When choosing a margarine, try to find one with the lowest trans fat content possible and less than 3 grams total of saturated plus trans fats.”³

Foods fortified with plant sterols or stanols

“Foods are now available that have been fortified with sterols or stanols—substances found in plants that help block the absorption of cholesterol.

Margarines and orange juice fortified with plant sterols can help reduce LDL cholesterol by more than 10 percent. The amount of daily plant sterols needed for results is at least 2 grams, which equals about two 8-ounce servings of plant sterol-fortified orange juice a day.

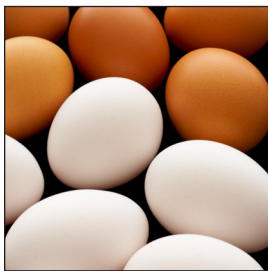
Plant sterols or stanols in fortified foods don’t appear to affect levels of triglycerides or of “good” high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. Nor do they interfere with the absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins—vitamins A, D, E, and K.

However, the American Heart Association recommends foods fortified with plant sterols **only for people who actually have high levels of LDL cholesterol** [emphasis added].”¹

Eggs

“Eggs are high in cholesterol, and a diet high in cholesterol can contribute to elevated blood cholesterol levels. But the extent to which dietary cholesterol raises blood cholesterol levels isn’t clear. Many scientists believe that saturated fats and trans fats have a greater impact than dietary cholesterol in raising blood cholesterol.

If you are healthy, it is recommended that you limit your dietary cholesterol intake to less than 300 milligrams (mg) a day. If you have cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or high LDL cholesterol, limit dietary cholesterol intake to less than 200 mg a day. The yolk of one large egg has about 213 mg of cholesterol. If you eat an egg on a given day, it may be a good idea to limit or avoid other sources of cholesterol for the rest of that day.



If you like eggs but don’t want the extra cholesterol, use egg whites. Egg whites contain no cholesterol. You may also use cholesterol-free egg substitutes, which are made with egg whites. If you want to reduce cholesterol in a recipe that

calls for eggs, you can use two egg whites or ¼ cup cholesterol-free egg substitute in place of one whole egg.”⁴

Soy

Finally, a word about soy. “Long thought to have cholesterol-lowering effects, a recent meta-analysis by the American Heart Association’s Nutrition Committee showed soy protein actually has very little impact on reducing cholesterol levels. In

January 2006, the American Heart Association issued a statement saying the cardiovascular health benefits of soy protein are minimal at best. No benefit was seen on HDL, triglycerides, or blood pressure, and even with a large intake of soy, only a small impact on LDL was seen.



Though it may not lower your cholesterol, soy does contain vitamins and minerals and is a good source of fiber. It’s also a healthy low-fat alternative source of protein.”¹

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic (2006). Cholesterol: The best foods to lower your cholesterol and protect your heart [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://mayoclinic.com/health/cholesterol/CL00002>.
2. Mayo Clinic (2007). Nuts and your heart: Eating nuts for heart health [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://mayoclinic.com/health/nuts/HB00085>.
3. Mayo Clinic (2006). Butter vs. margarine: Which is better for my heart? [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://mayoclinic.com/health/butter-vs-margarine/AN00835>.
4. Mayo Clinic (2005). Eggs: Are they good or bad for my cholesterol? [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://mayoclinic.com/health/cholesterol/HQ00608>.

Quick Tips: Healthy Food Choices at-a-Glance

Choose foods naturally low in saturated fat. These foods are often low in cholesterol and trans fat, too, and include a diet rich in:

- fruits,
- vegetables,
- whole grains,
- high-fiber foods,
- low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and
- lean cuts of meat.^{1,2,3}



Replace saturated fats with healthier substitutes.

- Use liquid vegetable oils and soft margarines in place of hard margarine or shortening. For example, when your own recipe calls for butter, lard, bacon, bacon fat, or chicken fat, use margarine that contains no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per 1 tablespoon or unsaturated vegetable oil.⁴
- Use naturally occurring, unhydrogenated liquid vegetable oils such as canola, safflower, sunflower, or olive oil most often.^{2,5}
- Use soft margarine as a substitute for butter, and choose soft margarines (liquid or tub varieties) over harder stick forms. Look for "0 g trans fat" on the Nutrition Facts label.²

To reduce dietary cholesterol, try substituting two egg whites for each egg yolk in many recipes that call for eggs.⁵

Limit meat consumption, but when choosing the meats you will consume:

- Choose the leanest cuts of meat (e.g., beef sirloin, chuck, loin, or round; "choice" or

"select" grades rather than "prime"; pork tenderloin or loin chops; chicken or turkey rather than duck or goose).

- Remove visible fat from meat before cooking.
- Remove skin from poultry before eating.
- Choose white meat most often when eating poultry.
- Replace two servings of meat a week with two servings of fish (containing high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, mackerel, or lake trout).
- Limit or avoid eat organ meats, which are very high in cholesterol.
- Grill, bake, or broil meats.
- Cut back on processed meats that are high in saturated fat and sodium.⁵



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

- Minimize whole-fat products such as butter and whole milk or 2 percent full-fat dairy products (yogurt, cheeses).
- Look for fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese, part-skim milk mozzarella, ricotta, and other fat-free or low-fat cheeses.⁵

Choose foods high in fiber.

- Foods high in soluble fiber include oat bran, oatmeal, beans, peas, rice bran, barley, citrus fruits, strawberries, and apple pulp.
- Foods high in insoluble fiber include whole-wheat breads, wheat cereals, wheat bran,

cabbage, beets, carrots, Brussels sprouts, turnips, cauliflower, and apple skin.

- Replace low-fiber foods (white bread, white rice, candy, and chips) with fiber-containing foods (whole-grain bread, brown rice, fruits, and vegetables).
- Read the Nutrition Facts label on all packaged foods that claim to contain oat bran or wheat bran. Many of these products actually contain very little fiber and may also be high in sodium, calories, and saturated or trans fat.⁵



Use less salt or no salt at the table and in cooking. Instead, try these tips:

- Use herbs and spices or some of the salt-free seasoning mixes in place of salt.
- Use lemon juice, citrus zest, or hot chiles to add flavor.
- To reduce the salt in canned vegetables, drain the liquid; then rinse the vegetables in water before eating.

- Try rinsing other high sodium foods, such as canned tuna and salmon, feta cheese, and capers, to remove some of the sodium.⁵
- Read the labels of all foods carefully. Even bakery products and cereals can be major sources of sodium in the diet.⁴

Cut back on beverages and other foods with added sugars (sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, dextrose, corn syrups, high-fructose corn syrup, concentrated fruit juice, and honey). Read the ingredient list, and choose items that don't have added sugars in their first four listed ingredients.⁵

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic (2006). Lowering cholesterol: Could your diet use some TLC? [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://mayoclinic.com/health/lowering-cholesterol/CL00014>.
2. American Heart Association (2007). Know your fats [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=532>.
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4. American Heart Association (2007). Cooking for lowering cholesterol [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=515>.
5. American heart Association (2007). Making healthy food choices [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=537>.

Eating Out

Though it would be nice if we could always know the exact amounts of nutrients and fats we are eating, that's simply not possible all of the time. When we are away from home and eating out, we can't always know the exact ingredients and amounts, but we can learn to ask questions and make healthy selections. Here are some tips for eating out more healthfully:



- Don't be shy about making special requests.
- Call ahead for special requests when appropriate.
- If you are unsure of how an entrée is prepared, ask your server.
- Request visible fat be trimmed from meat and skin be removed from poultry before cooking.
- Control portion sizes by sharing entrees with a companion or putting half of your meal in a to-go box for another time before you begin eating.
- Look for steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, poached, or roasted foods.
- Avoid fried, au gratin, crispy, escalloped, pan-fried, sautéed, or stuffed foods, which are usually high in fat and calories.
- Request that your meal be prepared with vegetable oil (made from canola, olive, corn, soy, sunflower, or safflower) or soft margarine instead of butter. Ask for soft margarine for your bread.
- Have gravy, sauces, and dressings served on the side, so you can control the amount you eat or skip them completely.

- Limit high sodium choices, such as those that are pickled, in cocktail sauce, smoked, in broth or au jus, or in soy or teriyaki sauce.
- Ask that your food be prepared without added salt or MSG.
- Ask if the restaurant has fat-free or 1 percent milk instead of whole milk.
- Ask if the restaurant offers fruit or sherbet instead of high fat pastries or ice cream for dessert. Even if it is not on the menu, some restaurants will have these choices available.
- Many supermarkets and specialty stores offer prepared entrees to take home when you're in a rush; the same tips (above) apply to these take-home foods.¹⁰

"If you eat out a lot..., be aware that many restaurants continue to use trans fat. Trans fat is often a part of the oil restaurants use to fry food. A large serving of French fries at some restaurants can contain 5 grams or more of trans fat.

Some restaurants put nutritional information on their menus, but most aren't required to list trans fat content. But, things may be changing. New York City recently banned trans fat from being used in restaurants."¹¹



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