

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>.
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3. U.S. National Library of Medicine (2007). Fat [on-line]. Retrieved October 10, 2007. From <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002468.htm>.
4. American Heart Association (2007). Cooking for lowering cholesterol [on-line]. Retrieved September 26, 2007. From <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=515>.
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