



# American Heart Month

You can prevent heart disease by following a heart-healthy lifestyle.

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 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. Nutrition and calorie information on food labels is typically based on a 2,000 calorie diet. You may need fewer or more calories depending on several factors including age, gender, and level of physical activity.
- If you are trying not to gain 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.

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

Nutrient-rich foods have minerals, protein, whole grains and other nutrients but are lower in calories. They may help you control your weight, cholesterol and blood pressure.

Eat an overall healthy dietary pattern that emphasizes:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables,
- Whole grains,
- Low-fat dairy products,
- Skinless poultry and fish
- Nuts and legumes
- Limit saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages. If you choose to eat red meat, compare labels and select the leanest cuts available.

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

- Eat a variety of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruits without high-calorie sauces or added salt and sugars. Replace high-calorie foods with fruits and vegetables.
- Choose fiber-rich whole grains for most grain servings.
- Choose poultry and fish without skin and prepare them in healthy ways without added saturated and trans fat. If you choose to eat meat, look for the leanest cuts available and prepare them in healthy and delicious ways.
- Select fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) dairy products.
- Avoid foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.
- Limit saturated fat and trans fat and replace them with the better fats, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated.
- Choose foods with less sodium and prepare foods with little or no salt. To lower blood pressure, aim to eat no more than 2,400 milligrams of sodium per day.
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. That means no more than one drink per day if you're a woman and no more than two drinks per day if you're a man.
- Don't smoke tobacco — and avoid secondhand smoke.

Source: [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/The-American-Heart-Associations-Diet-and-Lifestyle-Recommendations\\_UCM\\_305855\\_Article.jsp#.WFmcBv4UXug](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/The-American-Heart-Associations-Diet-and-Lifestyle-Recommendations_UCM_305855_Article.jsp#.WFmcBv4UXug)

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