



How Do I Follow a Healthy Diet?

The American Heart Association recommends an eating plan that emphasizes intake of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and includes low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish, legumes (dried beans and peas), nontropical vegetable oils, nuts and seeds. It should limit intake of sodium, sweets, sugar-sweetened beverages and red meats.



Vegetables

- One serving equals: 1 cup raw leafy vegetables (about the size of a small fist); ½ cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetables; ½ cup vegetable juice.
- Eat a variety of colors and types, especially deeply colored vegetables, such as spinach, carrots, and broccoli.
- Look for vegetables that are fresh, frozen, or canned in water without added sugar, saturated and *trans* fats, or salt.

Fruits

- One serving equals: 1 medium fruit (about the size of a baseball); ¼ cup dried fruit; ½ cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit; ½ cup 100% fruit juice.
- Eat a variety of colors and types, especially deeply colored fruits such as peaches and berries.
- Eat whole fruits to get all of the nutrients (such as fiber) that can be missing in some juices.

Whole grains

- One serving equals: 1 slice bread; ½ cup hot cereal, 1 cup flaked cereal; or ½ cup cooked rice or pasta (about the size of a baseball).
- At least half of your servings should be high-fiber whole grains. Select items like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain crackers and brown rice.
- Aim for about 25-30 grams of fiber from foods each day.

Poultry, fish and lean meats (less than 6 cooked ounces per day)

- A 3 oz. portion is about the size of a deck of playing cards, ½ of a chicken breast or ¾ cup of flaked fish.
- Enjoy at least 2 servings of baked or grilled fish each week; especially fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon, trout, and herring. (3 oz. of grilled or baked fish is about the size of a checkbook).
- Trim all visible fat from meats before cooking.
- Remove skin from poultry before eating.

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Nuts, seeds, and legumes

- One serving equals: $\frac{1}{3}$ cup or $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz nuts; 2 Tbsp. peanut butter (no salt added); 2 Tbsp. or $\frac{1}{2}$ oz seeds; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked legumes (dried beans or peas).
- Add beans to your soups, salads, and pasta dishes.
- Try unsalted nuts in your salads, stir-fries, or stirred into yogurt.

Low-fat dairy products

- One serving equals: 1 cup milk or yogurt or $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. low sodium, fat-free or low-fat cheese (about the size of 6 stacked dice).
- Use only milk products with 0% to 1% fat. 2% milk is not low-fat.
- Have only fat-free or low-fat yogurt with no added sugars.
- Use dry-curd, fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese.
- Cheeses (low-sodium, fat-free or low-fat) should have no more than 3 grams of fat per oz. and no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per oz.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** (1-800-242-8721), or visit **heart.org** to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up to get *Heart Insight*, a free magazine for heart patients and their families, at **heartinsight.org**.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at **heart.org/supportnetwork**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

How many calories should I eat each day?

What's a good, healthy cookbook?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **heart.org/answersbyheart** to learn more.