Low-Fat, Low-Saturated-Fat, Low-Cholesterol Diets

Food Selection Guide

BREADS, CEREALS, PASTA, RICE, DRIED PEAS, AND BEANS

These products are high in carbohydrates and most are low in fat. Therefore, they can be increased in the diet as substitutes for fatty foods. They too, however, contain calories and should not be eaten in excess. Cereals can be eaten for snacks as well as for breakfast.

Include foods that contain fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes). Research shows that fiber may lower blood cholesterol levels, especially the water-soluble fiber found in fruits, vegetables, oat products, and legumes.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

It is good to eat fruits and vegetables. Besides being sources of fiber, both are rich in vitamins and some minerals. They help you get the daily allowances of these nutrients. Fruits and vegetables can be used for snacks and desserts.

MEATS

Limit lean meat, chicken, turkey, and fish to **no more than 6 ounces** per day.

Beef, Pork, and Lamb

- Use lean cuts of beef, pork, and lamb. Lean cuts include:
  - Extra-lean ground beef.
  - Arm roast.
  - Sirloin tip.
  - Center-cut ham.
  - Round steak.
  - Loin chops.
  - Rump roast.
  - Tenderloin.

Trim all fat off the outside of meats before cooking. It is not necessary to severely decrease the intake of red meat, but lean choices should be made. Lean meat is rich in protein and contains a highly absorbable form of iron. Premenopausal women, in particular, should avoid reducing lean red meat because this could increase the risk for low red blood cells (*iron-deficiency anemia*).

Processed Meats

Processed meats, such as bacon, bologna, salami, sausage, and hot dogs contain large quantities of fat, are not rich in valuable nutrients, and should not be eaten very often.

Organ Meats

The organ meats, such as liver, sweetbreads, kidneys, and brain are very rich in cholesterol. They should be limited.

Chicken and Turkey

These are good sources of protein. The fat of poultry can be reduced by removing the skin and underlying fat layers before cooking. Chicken and turkey can be substituted for lean red meat in the diet. Poultry should not be fried or covered with high-fat sauces.

Fish and Shellfish
Fish is a good source of protein. Shellfish contain cholesterol, but they usually are low in saturated fatty acids. The preparation of fish is important. Like chicken and turkey, they should not be fried or covered with high-fat sauces.

EGGS
Egg yolks often are hidden in cooked and processed foods. Egg whites contain no fat or cholesterol. They can be eaten often. Try 1 to 2 egg whites instead of whole eggs in recipes or use egg substitutes that do not contain yolk.

MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS
Use skim or 1% milk instead of 2% or whole milk. Decrease whole milk, natural, and processed cheeses. Use nonfat or low-fat (2%) cottage cheese or low-fat cheeses made from vegetable oils. Choose nonfat or low-fat (1 to 2%) yogurt. Experiment with evaporated skim milk in recipes that call for heavy cream. Substitute low-fat yogurt or low-fat cottage cheese for sour cream in dips and salad dressings. Have at least 2 servings of low-fat dairy products, such as 2 glasses of skim (or 1%) milk each day to help get your daily calcium intake.

FATS AND OILS
Reduce the total intake of fats, especially saturated fat. Butterfat, lard, and beef fats are high in saturated fat and cholesterol. These should be avoided as much as possible. Vegetable fats do not contain cholesterol, but certain vegetable fats, such as coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil are very high in saturated fats. These should be limited. These fats are often used in bakery goods, processed foods, popcorn, oils, and nondairy creamers. Vegetable shortenings and some peanut butters contain hydrogenated oils, which are also saturated fats. Read the labels on these foods and check for saturated vegetable oils.

Unsaturated vegetable oils and fats do not raise blood cholesterol. However, they should be limited because they are fats and are high in calories. Total fat should still be limited to 30% of your daily caloric intake. Desirable liquid vegetable oils are corn oil, cottonseed oil, olive oil, canola oil, safflower oil, soybean oil, and sunflower oil. Peanut oil is not as good, but small amounts are acceptable. Buy a heart-healthy tub margarine that has no partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredients. Mayonnaise and salad dressings often are made from unsaturated fats, but they should also be limited because of their high calorie and fat content.

Seeds, nuts, peanut butter, olives, and avocados are high in fat, but the fat is mainly the unsaturated type. These foods should be limited mainly to avoid excess calories and fat.

OTHER EATING TIPS
Snacks
Most sweets should be limited as snacks. They tend to be rich in calories and fats, and their caloric content outweighs their nutritional value. Some good choices in snacks are graham crackers, melba toast, soda crackers, bagels (no egg), English muffins, fruits, and vegetables. These snacks are preferable to snack crackers, French fries, and chips. Popcorn should be air-popped or cooked in small amounts of liquid vegetable oil.

Desserts
Eat fruit, low-fat yogurt, and fruit ices instead of pastries, cake, and cookies. Sherbet, angel food cake, gelatin dessert, frozen low-fat yogurt, or other frozen products that do not contain saturated fat (pure fruit juice bars, frozen ice pops) are also acceptable.

COOKING METHODS
Choose those methods that use little or no fat. They include:
- Poaching.

- Braising.
- Steaming.
- Grilling.
- Baking.
- Stir-frying.
- Broiling.
- Microwaving.

Foods can be cooked in a nonstick pan without added fat, or use a nonfat cooking spray in regular cookware. Limit fried foods and avoid frying in saturated fat. Add moisture to lean meats by using water, broth, cooking wines, and other nonfat or low-fat sauces along with the cooking methods mentioned above.

Soups and stews should be chilled after cooking. The fat that forms on top after a few hours in the refrigerator should be skimmed off. When preparing meals, avoid using excess salt. Salt can contribute to raising blood pressure in some people.

EATING AWAY FROM HOME

Order entrées, potatoes, and vegetables without sauces or butter. When meat exceeds the size of a deck of cards (3 to 4 ounces), the rest can be taken home for another meal.

Choose vegetable or fruit salads and ask for low-calorie salad dressings to be served on the side. Use dressings sparingly. Limit high-fat toppings, such as bacon, crumbled eggs, cheese, sunflower seeds, and olives. Ask for heart-healthy tub margarine instead of butter.

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