



Your Ultimate
Guide to
Nutrition and Heart
Health



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Why is Nutrition Important for Heart Health?

Nutrition plays a multidimensional role in cardiovascular health and can have an effect on:

Blood lipid (LDL and HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides) levels and oxidation

Blood pressure

Endothelial (the inner lining of blood vessels) function

Inflammation

Insulin levels and insulin resistance

Let's explore these topics in greater depth...

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LDL cholesterol

LDL cholesterol is often referred to as the “bad” cholesterol, while HDL cholesterol is often referred to as the “good” cholesterol. People who are told they have high cholesterol need to lower their LDL cholesterol.

It is recommended that people with high cholesterol reduce their saturated fat consumption. When reducing consumption of saturated fat, a key factor is what replaces it. It is important to look at the quality of the fats and/or carbohydrates replacing saturated fat in the diet.

It is best to replace saturated fat with polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) and carbohydrates from whole foods. Focus eating habits on heart healthy foods and limit choices that raise risk, including excess calories.

There is high-quality evidence that for every 1% of saturated fat calories replaced by:

PUFA	MUFA	Carbohydrate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">LDL decreases by 2.1 mg/dLTriglycerides decreases by 0.88 mg/dL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LDL decreases by 1.6 mg/dLTriglycerides decreases by 0.35 mg/dL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LDL decreases by 1.3 mg/dLTriglycerides: increases by 0.97 mg/dL



Reducing Added Sugars

Another important consideration for heart health (and overall health) is reducing added sugars.

The target for overall health is no more than 5 to 10% of calories coming from added sugars.

- On a 2000 calorie diet, this would be 25-50 grams maximum.
- On a 1600 calorie diet, this would be 20-40 grams maximum.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 recommends $\leq 10\%$ of calories come from added sugar. For an individual consuming 1800-2000 calories per day, ≤ 180 -200 calories from added sugars means ≤ 45 -50 gm added sugar per day.

The American Heart Association recommends ≤ 100 calories/day (25 grams) for women and ≤ 150 calories/day (36 grams) for men.

The current average in the U.S. is 13% of calories coming from added sugars. This is approximately equivalent to 65 grams of added sugar. A good goal is to cut out $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the current amount of added sugar.

food sources



Cookies /
Wafers



Liquid sweeteners
such as maple syrup,
agave, and honey



Chocolates /
Candy



Cakes / Pies



Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against artery walls. High blood pressure increases the risk for heart attacks, strokes, chronic heart failure, and kidney disease. The American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology recommend reducing dietary sodium to lower blood pressure

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There is strong evidence for reducing sodium intake and reducing sodium in the context of a healthy dietary pattern

There is moderate evidence for:

Reducing sodium intake to < 2300 mg/day

Reducing sodium by at least 1000 mg/day to lower BP even if the recommended sodium intake is not reached

Reducing sodium intake to 1500 mg/day may lead to a greater decrease in BP

1000 mg of sodium can be cut from typical daily intake just by making four swaps and tweaks that each cut sodium by 250 mg or more. Seek choices that promote health



The American Heart Association identifies the six foods that provide the most sodium (42% of average US intake), called the Salty Six:

Sandwiches



Pizza



Bread



Poultry



Soup



Deli Meat



An additional 13% of average US intake comes from grain-based mixed dishes and meat, poultry, and seafood mixed dishes. Other common culprits include savory snack foods, condiments, cheese, and processed vegetables and legumes

It can also be helpful to know what different FDA-approved nutrition claims on labels mean, such as:

- Salt/Sodium-Free: less than 5 mg in a serving
- Very Low Sodium: 35 mg or less in a serving
- Low Sodium: 140 mg or less in a serving
- Reduced Sodium: at least 25% less sodium than the "regular" version of the product
- Light in Sodium or Lightly Salted: at least 50% less sodium than the "regular" version of the product

Note that reduced sodium products and light in sodium or lightly salted products can still contain a great deal of sodium, depending on how much sodium is in the "regular" product



Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet is effective at all blood pressure levels but has the greatest effect in people with high blood pressure or people who consume a high-sodium diet. Additionally, it augments the effectiveness of anti-hypertension medications.

In a study comparing the DASH diet with 2400 mg sodium to a standard U.S. diet with 3300 mg sodium, blood pressure decreased by 7.1/3.6 mm Hg with the DASH diet.

Healthful eating patterns (including the DASH diet) have the following characteristics:

Predominantly plant-focused as compared to a standard Western diet

Calorie Balanced for a Healthy Weight

Long-term habit

Part of a healthy lifestyle including exercise and stress management



Pulses

Pulses can be a fun, affordable addition to a healthy diet. Pulses are the dried edible seeds of legumes. They include dried peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dried beans (such as black beans, kidney beans, navy beans, etc.). Pulses are high in protein and fiber and low in fat

Some of the benefits of pulses are:

1

They promote healthy blood sugar. They contain viscous fiber, which slows stomach emptying and slows carbohydrate absorption. They also contain protein which slows stomach emptying as well. These actions reduce the glycemic effect of the meal.

2

They lower blood cholesterol: According to an analysis of 25 randomized controlled trials (RCTs), a daily serving of pulses can lower LDL by at least 5% (about 6.6 mg/dl), sometimes in as little as two weeks. In most of the RCTs, the comparison was to heart-healthy diets so pulses may have an added beneficial effect

3

They can aid in weight loss/maintenance: The viscous fiber in pulses slows stomach emptying, which leads to a feeling of fullness. Additionally, the protein in pulses stimulates gastric hormones that lead to satiety signals

Try adding pulses to omelets, soups, whole grains, tacos or burritos, salads, pasta sauces, stir-fries, and chili

RECIPE

Overnight Apple Pie Oats

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 8 hours

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 cup Oats
- 4 cup Oat milk, plain, unsweetened (Or Other Non-Dairy Milk)
- 2 tsp Vanilla Extract
- 2 Apple, medium, Chopped
- 1/2 cup Water, or more if needed
- 2 tsp Cinnamon (or other spice)
- 4 Tbs Pumpkin Seeds
- 2 Tbs Coconut Flakes

Instructions

Prep

1. Evenly divide the oats, oat milk, and vanilla extract among containers with sealable lids (mason jars are perfect). Seal and shake well. Refrigerate overnight to allow oats to soften.

Make

1. Wash and chop apples.
2. Heat a small sauce pan over medium heat. Add the water, chopped apple, and pumpkin pie spice. Cook until the water has evaporated and the apples are softened and fragrant.
3. To assemble: Remove the oats from the refrigerator and take the lid off of the container. Evenly divide the apple mixture between the containers. Top with pumpkin seeds and coconut flakes.

Chicken and Hummus Lettuce Wrap with Cilantro and Lime

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Yield: 2 servings

Ingredients

- 12 oz chicken breast, cooked
- 4 Tbs hummus
- 1/4 cup cilantro, fresh, chopped
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/2 seedless cucumber
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 head romaine (8 leaves)

Instructions

Prep

1. Chop cilantro, tomato and cucumber and juice half of a lime. Put into a small bowl and set aside.
2. Cut leaves off from head of romaine.
3. In the bowl, mix in hummus.

Make

1. On a lined or grease sheet tray, cook thinly sliced chicken breasts for 45 minutes at 375°, or until center reaches 165°.
2. After chicken is done, and cooled, cut it into pieces.
3. Using the lettuce as a wrap, add mixture and chicken.



Turkey Pumpkin Chili

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 onion, diced
- 4 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup red bell pepper, chopped (about 1 red pepper)
- 2 zucchini, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 cup black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1 lb turkey breast, ground
- 1 Tbs chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin, ground
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 tomatoes, canned diced
- 1 1/2 cup pumpkin purée
- 4 cup chicken stock, low-sodium
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Instructions

Prep

1. Dice the onion, carrots, pepper, zucchini, and mince the garlic cloves.
2. Drain and rinse the black beans.

Make

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic. Cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the carrots, peppers, and cook for an additional 5 minutes, until carrots begin to soften.
2. Add the turkey, and cook until browned, breaking up the ground turkey into crumbles.
3. Stir in the chili powder, cumin, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper, and cook for an additional minute.
4. Add in the zucchini, diced tomatoes, pumpkin purée, chicken stock, and black beans; stir to combine.
5. Bring the chili to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes.
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste.



Seed Crusted Salmon with Lentils and Kale

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 Cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 8 cup kale, spines removed and torn
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1 1/2 cup lentils, canned, drained and rinsed
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Instructions

Prep

1. Mince garlic.
2. Juice lemon. Peel and chop carrots.
3. Wash kale, remove spines and tear into bite-sized pieces.

Make

1. In a large sauté pan, gently sauté garlic in olive oil until fragrant.
2. Add carrots, lentils, and lemon juice and continue to sauté over low heat until carrots are tender.
3. Add kale, stir to combine and cover sauté pan with lid. Let stand until kale wilts, approximately 5 more minutes.
4. If you want your kale cooked more, just turn heat to low for additional few minutes.
5. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

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