

Heart-Healthy Eating Plan

What you eat makes a difference to your heart. A heart-healthy eating plan emphasizes vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, includes fat-free or low-fat dairy products, and limits foods high in saturated fat and sugar-sweetened beverages and sweets. Use the guide below to determine how much you should eat from each food group.*

Food Group

Heart-Healthy Options



Whole Grains

Bread, cereal, starchy vegetables, rice, and pasta (6 ounces for women and 8 ounces for men)

- ♥ Whole grain versions of sliced bread, sandwich buns, dinner rolls, pita, English muffins, bagels
- ♥ Unsalted, low-fat crackers (such as graham crackers), pretzels, and popcorn
- ♥ Cooked hot cereals (not instant) and whole grain cold cereals
- ♥ Rice and pasta (such as whole grain noodles, spaghetti, and macaroni)



Vegetables

(without added fat)
(2½ cups)

- ♥ Fresh, frozen, or no-salt-added canned vegetables (such as green beans, string beans, carrots, cabbage, tomatoes, squash, broccoli, and okra)



Fruits

(2 cups)

- ♥ Fresh, frozen, canned (in fruit juice rather than syrup), or dried fruits



Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products

Milk, yogurt, and cheese
(3 cups)

- ♥ Fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk
- ♥ Fat-free or low-fat yogurt
- ♥ Cheeses lower in fat and sodium



Protein

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, and legumes
(5½ ounces)

- ♥ Chicken or turkey without the skin
- ♥ Fish
- ♥ Lean cuts of beef, such as round, sirloin, chuck, loin, and extra-lean ground beef
- ♥ Lean cuts of pork, such as the leg, shoulder, tenderloin, and lean ham
- ♥ Eggs
- ♥ Cooked dry beans and peas (such as field peas, crowder peas, black-eyed peas)
- ♥ Frozen butter beans and lima beans
- ♥ Nuts and seeds



Fats and oils

(less than 22 grams of saturated fat)

- ♥ Soft tub margarine
- ♥ Oils (canola, corn, safflower, olive, peanut, or sesame)



Sweets and added sugars

Limit sugar and other sweeteners. Ask your healthcare provider about how much sugar or other sweetener is okay for you.

- ♥ Frozen desserts (such as frozen juice pops, low-fat frozen yogurt, or low-fat ice cream)
- ♥ Low-fat cake and cookies (such as angel food cake, fig bar cookies, ginger snaps, animal crackers, vanilla wafers, and graham crackers)

*Serving sizes depend on how many calories you need, which is based on your age, gender, and physical activity.

