



BalanceHealth[®] Newsletter

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10 Foods for a Healthy Heart

February is Heart Health Awareness Month!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. It is also one of the main causes of death in Canada and is killing more and more people throughout the world. Dietary advice for reducing heart disease risk includes eating a balanced diet with less saturated fat from red meats, more fresh fruits and vegetables, more fish, less sugar, more fiber and for many people, fewer total calories. Then you can make your heart and the rest of your cardiovascular system even healthier by adding more of these foods:

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are packed with vitamins and lycopene, which has been shown to reduce heart disease risk. Add thick slices of tomatoes to sandwiches and salads or enjoy tomato sauce on whole wheat pasta. In fact, cooked tomato sauce and canned tomato sauce that you buy in the store both contain more lycopene than raw tomatoes.

Olive Oil

Olive oil reduces your risk of heart disease by lowering your LDL cholesterol levels. Choose olive oil for cooking, or make a nice dip for whole grain bread by pouring a bit of olive oil in a small bowl and add a bit of balsamic vinegar and a sprinkle of oregano.

Oats

Oats contain a soluble fiber called beta glucan that helps reduce total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. Soluble fiber also helps keep your digestive system healthy. Enjoy oatmeal with just a small amount of brown sugar and plenty of strawberries and walnuts for breakfast. Cold cereals made with oats are also great with low-fat milk or soy milk plus slices of fresh fruit.

Apples

Apples contain a phytochemical called quercetin which acts as an anti-inflammatory and will help prevent blood clots as well. Apples contain vitamins and fiber, come in several delicious varieties and are portable. Eat an apple with a handful of walnuts or almonds as a healthy snack or add apple slices to your healthy salads.



For more information or advice about Heart Health, contact your Wellness Coordinator by calling

1.800.327.2255

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Salmon

Fish is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids that protect your heart by reducing both inflammation and the risk of blood clots. These fats also work to keep your cholesterol levels healthy. Eat salmon or other oily ocean fish like tuna, sardines or herring at least two times per week. For a heart-healthy meal, try grilled salmon steaks with a green vegetable and a side salad with a sprinkling of lemon juice instead of high-calorie salad dressing.

Almonds

Almonds and other nuts contain healthy oils, vitamin E and other substances that will help keep cholesterol levels in check. Almonds are also a good source of protein and fiber. Almonds make a great snack on their own, or sprinkle slivered almonds on green beans or asparagus with lemon juice as a deliciously healthy side dish.

Whole Grains

Whole grains provide vitamins and fiber that will help to keep your heart healthy. Make a deliciously healthy sandwich with two slices of 100-percent whole-grain bread, three ounces of lean turkey breast, lots of sliced tomatoes and avocado, plus lettuce and a bit of mustard. Switch from white pasta to whole grain pasta too.

Green leafy vegetables

Green leafy vegetables contain folate, which helps to keep homocysteine levels down, and vitamin E. Green leafy vegetables have also been associated with better retention of memory as we age. Try using fresh spinach leaves or other greens for your favorite salad instead of iceberg lettuce.

Soy

Soy protein has been shown to prevent heart attacks and soy makes an excellent protein substitute for red meat, which will reduce your saturated fat intake. Add tofu to your favorite stir fry or pour soy milk on your morning cereal.

Red wine

Red wine contains a powerful antioxidant called resveratrol. Resveratrol has been shown to be good for your heart. Be sure to enjoy red wine in moderation. Studies show that only 4 to 8 ounces of red wine is needed each day.

By Shereen Jegtvig

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