

# Protect Your Heart: Cook with Heart-Healthy Foods

## Toolkit No. 8

You can protect your heart and blood vessels by eating less saturated fat and by choosing the types of fats that help your cholesterol levels. The ingredients you use and the way you cook can make a big difference. Try these tips:

- Cook with less fat.
- Choose lean meats, poultry, and pork.
- Choose low-fat dairy foods.
- Substitute lower-fat ingredients in recipes.

### Cook with less fat

**Use a low-fat or fat-free way to cook.** You can cut down on total fat by broiling, microwaving, baking, roasting, steaming, or grilling foods. Nonstick pans and cooking sprays also work well.

**Boost the flavor with seasonings and sauces instead of fats.** Look for recipes that use herbs and spices for flavor instead of fat. Try these ways to season food:

- Squeeze fresh lemon juice on steamed vegetables, broiled fish, rice, or pasta.
- Try lemon pepper or mesquite seasoning on chicken.
- Use onion and garlic to liven up meats and vegetables.
- Try baking chicken or pork with barbecue sauce or low-fat Italian dressing.

**Trim the fat when possible.** Cut away visible fat from meat and poultry. Roast food on a rack to let the fat drip off. Make soups a day ahead so you can chill them and then remove the fat that has risen to the top.

### Choose lean cuts of beef, poultry, and pork

To help keep your cholesterol on target, choose lean cuts of meat and poultry. Try some of your favorite recipes with these lean choices:



Choosing lean meats with less saturated fat can help lower blood cholesterol.

- When selecting beef, choose lean cuts such as round, sirloin, and flank steak; tenderloin; rib, chuck, or rump roast; T-bone, porterhouse, or cubed steak.
- Choose poultry such as chicken, turkey, or Cornish hen without the skin. The white breast meat is lower in fat than the darker meat in the thigh and leg pieces.
- Lean types of pork include ham, Canadian bacon, pork loin, and center loin chops.

### Choose low-fat dairy products

Dairy products can be part of your meal plan. To cut back on saturated fat, choose items made with non-fat or low-fat milk. Some low-fat choices are listed below.

- Milk: Fat-free (skim), 1/2%, and 1% milk and low-fat buttermilk
- Yogurt: low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- Cheese: cottage cheese, grated Parmesan, and any cheese with 3 grams of fat or less per ounce
- For a frozen treat, try low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt instead of ice cream. You can also freeze regular yogurt for a treat.

- **Cook with less fat.** You can cut down on total fat by broiling, microwaving, baking, roasting, steaming, or grilling foods. Using nonstick pans and cooking sprays instead of cooking with fat also helps.
- **Eat more foods that are high in fiber.** Foods high in fiber may help lower blood cholesterol. Fiber also can prevent problems with the digestive system such as constipation. Oatmeal, oat bran, dried beans and peas (such as kidney beans, pinto beans, and black-eyed peas), fruits, and vegetables are good sources of fiber.
- **Include more soy protein in your meals and snacks.** Replacing foods high in saturated fat with soy-containing foods may help lower your cholesterol. Foods with soy protein include soybeans, tofu, miso, tempeh, soy nuts, soy milk, textured soy protein, soy protein powder, and items that are made from soybeans, such as burgers.
- **Limit your alcoholic beverage consumption.** Drinking light to moderate amounts of alcohol is associated with a low risk of heart disease, perhaps by raising HDL (good) cholesterol levels. There isn't enough information to recommend that people who don't drink should start drinking alcohol to reduce heart risk. But, for those who do drink alcohol, 1 serving daily for women and up to 2 servings daily for men have been associated with good health. Drinking more than 1 to 2 drinks per day isn't helpful; it contributes unnecessary calories and may actually raise your blood pressure and triglycerides. In addition, it can cause other health problems. It's best to discuss drinking alcohol with your health care provider to find out whether it may be helpful for you.

A day of heart-healthy meals			
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Between-meal snacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fresh orange sections</li> <li>• oatmeal with 1% milk and raisins</li> <li>• toast with cholesterol-lowering margarine</li> <li>• coffee with 1% milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sliced turkey on whole wheat bread with lettuce and mustard</li> <li>• carrot sticks</li> <li>• cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• fresh apple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• baked chicken</li> <li>• baked potato with cholesterol-lowering margarine and low-fat sour cream</li> <li>• steamed green beans</li> <li>• tossed salad with low-fat salad dressing</li> <li>• low-fat frozen yogurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dried fruit</li> <li>• air-popped popcorn</li> <li>• rice cakes with peanut butter</li> </ul>

For more help, ask your health care team for copies of these brochures:

- Toolkit No. 7: *Protect Your Heart: Choose Fats Wisely*
- Toolkit No. 8: *Protect Your Heart: Cook with Heart-Healthy Foods*
- Toolkit No. 9: *Protect Your Heart: Check Food Labels to Make Heart-Healthy Choices*

