



## HEART HEALTHY & EXERCISE

By Owen Rothstein

### TIPS ON EATING & EXERCISE FOR YOUR HEART

Weight control and regular exercise are critical for keeping your heart in shape—but the food you eat may matter just as much. By understanding which foods and methods of cooking are healthiest for your heart, you may be able to prevent or manage heart disease and high blood pressure, and take greater control over the quality and length of your life.

#### HEART HEALTHY TIPS: Cutting out Saturated and Trans Fats

Of all the possible improvements you can make to your diet, limiting saturated fats and cutting out trans fats entirely is perhaps the most important. Both types of fat raise your LDL, or “bad” cholesterol level. Luckily, there are many ways to control how much saturated and trans fats you take in. Keep these culprits in mind as you cook and make food choices—and learn how to avoid them.

- 1. LIMIT SOLID FAT.** Reduce the amount of solid fats like butter, margarine, or shortening you add to food when cooking or serving. Instead of cooking with butter, for example, flavor your dishes with herbs or lemon juice.
- 2. SUBSTITUTE.** Swap out high-fat foods for their lower-fat counterparts. Top your baked potato, for example, with salsa or low-fat yogurt rather than butter, or use low-sugar fruit spread on your toast instead of margarine. When cooking, use liquid oils like canola, olive, safflower, or sunflower, and substitute two egg whites for one whole egg in a recipe.
- 3. BE LABEL-SAVVY.** Check food labels on any prepared foods. Many snacks, even those labeled “reduced fat,” may be made with oils containing trans fats. One clue that a food has some trans fat is the phrase “partially hydrogenated.”

#### HEART HEALTHY TIPS: Focus on high-fiber foods

A diet high in fiber can lower “bad” cholesterol and provide nutrients that can help protect against heart disease. By filling up on whole grains, vegetables, and fruits, you can get most of the fiber you’ll need, which means you’ll also be lowering your risk of heart disease. Refined or processed foods are lower in fiber content, so make whole grains an integral part of your diet. There are many simple ways to add whole grains to your meals.

- 1. BREAKFAST BETTER.** For breakfast choose a high-fiber breakfast cereal—one with five or more grams of fiber per serving. Or add a few tablespoons of unprocessed wheat bran to your favorite cereal.
- 2. TRY A NEW GRAIN.** Experiment with brown rice, wild rice, barley, whole-wheat pasta, and bulgur.

**3. BULK UP YOUR BAKING.** When baking at home, substitute whole-grain flour for half or all of the white flour, since whole-grain flour is heavier than white flour.

**4. ADD FLAXSEED.** Flaxseeds are small brown seeds that are high in fiber and omega-3 fatty acids, which can lower your total blood cholesterol. You can grind the seeds in a coffee grinder or food processor and stir a teaspoon of them into yogurt, applesauce, or hot cereal.

#### HEART HEALTHY TIPS: Cardio or aerobic exercise

A sedentary (inactive) lifestyle is one of the top risk factors for heart disease. Fortunately, it’s a risk factor that you can do something about. Regular exercise, especially aerobic exercise, has many benefits. It can:

1. Strengthen your heart and cardiovascular system
2. Improve your circulation and help your body use oxygen better
3. Increase endurance
4. Lower blood pressure
5. Improve muscle tone, strength, balance and joint flexibility
6. Help reduce body fat and help you reach a healthy weight
7. Help reduce stress, tension, anxiety, and depression
8. Improve sleep

Cardiovascular or aerobic activity strengthens the heart and lungs and improves the body’s ability to use oxygen. Aerobic exercise has the most benefits for your heart. Over time, aerobic exercise can help decrease your heart rate and blood pressure at rest and improve your breathing. Some examples of heart healthy exercise:

1. Walking
2. Jogging
3. Jumping rope
4. Bicycling (stationary or outdoor)
5. Cross-country skiing
6. Rowing
7. Low-impact aerobics or water aerobics

**ALL IN ALL, TREAT YOUR HEART WITH CARE AND IT WILL CONTINUE BEATING STRONG. EAT THE RIGHT FOODS FOR YOUR BODY AND STAY CONSISTENT WITH YOUR CARDIO. STAY AWAY FROM SATURATED FATS AND INTEGRATE HIGH FIBER FOODS INTO YOUR DIET. IT’S A SIMPLE STRATEGY FOR A LONG LIFE. YOUR HEART KEEPS YOUR BODY GOING; DO YOUR HEART A FAVOR AND KEEP IT GOING TOO.**



Sources:  
1. [www.helpguide.org/life/healthy\\_diet/heart\\_disease\\_stroke.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/healthy_diet/heart_disease_stroke.htm)  
2. [www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/exercise-healthy-heart](http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/exercise-healthy-heart)