



# HEALTHY TIMES

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## FOOD & NUTRITION



### Heart Healthy Diet

FEB 15TH, 2013

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For the longest time the key focus in preventing and treating heart disease was lowering cholesterol and saturated fat. However, even though this has been the focus, heart disease is still the number one killer of both men and women in the United States. The new thinking is going back to eating a traditional diet focused on nutrient dense whole foods.

Eating foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol are not what cause heart disease. But instead, a diet high in polyunsaturated fats, processed foods, low in fruits and vegetables, and lifestyle that promotes oxidative stress are the culprits that lead to heart disease. Here are some of the guidelines to eating heart healthy.

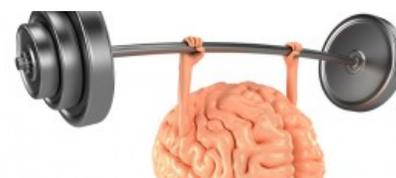
#### Avoid Processed and Refined Foods:

- Eating a diet high in refined carbohydrates (white flour, pasta, bread, sugar) elevates triglycerides, cholesterol, and insulin; elevated insulin is linked to elevated cholesterol, triglycerides, blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease; limit sources of refined carbohydrates.
- Highly processed and packaged foods are void of nutrients and phytochemicals that help the body overcome oxidation. Focus on eating whole foods that are minimally processed and an abundance of fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables.

#### Focus on Traditional Fats:

- Cook with saturated and monounsaturated fats. These are the most stable fats which means they are least likely to become rancid and cause oxidative damage to the

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body. Saturated fat is the most stable and suitable for high heat. Sources: butter, lard, coconut oil. Monounsaturated is best for medium to medium-high heat.

Sources: olive oil, avocado oil, peanut oil.

- Limit use of polyunsaturated plant oils. They are extremely unstable and likely to become rancid. Oxidized fats are one of the most dangerous compounds to the body. Never heat the oils and focus on consuming them in their whole form (nuts and seeds) where their fats are better protected.
- Cold-water fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, halibut, sardines, etc) are sources of longer-chain omega-3 essential fatty acids; they lower LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and decrease inflammation in the body. If you decide to take a fish oil supplement look for supplements that contain DHA (the longest omega-3 chain) and are purified to remove toxins.
- Margarine, trans fatty acids and partially hydrogenated oils are the worst fats you can consume. These fats raise LDL cholesterol and lower HDL cholesterol. They also interfere with essential fatty acid metabolism. Restrict margarine and products made with/fried in hydrogenated oil. Read the label and look in the ingredient list for partially or fully hydrogenated oil. If these are in the ingredient list, then the product contains trans fat. Do not rely on "trans fat free" labeling to ensure it is free of trans fat.



NOV 3RD, 2014

## Mushrooms: A Disease-Fighting Fungi

### Fruits and Vegetables:

- People who consume a diet high in fruits and vegetables are associated with a significant reduction in heart disease. Fresh produce should be incorporated into every meal. The USDA Dietary Recommendations suggest 2 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables should be consumed daily to help reduce risk of chronic disease.
- Fruits and vegetables are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals, and they contain thousands of biologically active phytochemicals that play a role in minimizing heart disease.
- Soluble fiber found in oats, barley, legumes, fruit, and vegetables lowers cholesterol by binding it up and removing it from the body during digestion.

### Grass-fed milk, dairy, and butter:

- An excellent source of heart healthy vitamin K2 is found in the butterfat of mammalian milk that are 100% grass-fed.
- Calcium in excess combined with a deficiency in vitamin K2 will lead to atherosclerosis, a buildup of calcium-laden plaque that accumulates in the arteries. Vitamin K2 removes calcium from soft tissues like arteries and veins which prevents calcium from forming plaque that will build up in the artery walls.
- Cows that are fed grain are either void of vitamin K2 or contain extremely low levels.

### Red Wine:

- Red wine contains heart healthy phytochemicals such as anthocyanidins (purple pigment) and resveratrol. These compounds are powerful antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, and anti-atherogenic.
- The alcohol in red wine also helps reduce risk of heart disease. When consumed in moderation (one to two drinks per day), alcohol significantly increases HDL cholesterol, reduces blood clot formation, increases enzymes that dissolve clots, and decrease inflammation. If you have heart disease, I would steer clear of alcohol, unless your doctor gives approval. Anything over 1-2 drinks per day is not considered beneficial to health.

### Chocolate:

- Dark chocolate is high in the phytochemicals called flavanols. They are antioxidants that reduce cell damage implicated in heart disease, lower blood pressure, and improve the health of the arteries.
- Choose dark chocolate with a cocoa content of 65% or higher. And like anything, moderation is the key, one to two ounces per day.

### Tea:

- Tea is an infusion of the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant.
- White, green, black, and oolong teas contain the phytochemicals flavanols,

specifically the catechins, with white tea having the highest concentration. The catechins are powerful antioxidants, they decrease inflammation, increase dilation of blood vessels, decrease platelet aggregation, and prevent cells from adhering to the arterial wall.

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