

Maintaining Heart Health



1. **Avoid trans fats.** These are the most detrimental of all fats. The FDA has now banned these hydrogenated fats. They are slowly being phased out of the highly processed foods like packaged baked goods, some margarines, frozen meals, candy, etc.



2. **Avoid refined carbohydrates.** The latest research shows that refined carbs and added sugars contribute more to heart disease, Diabetes, stroke, and high blood pressure than saturated fat does. Refined starches can include pasta, rice, crackers, bars, bread, chips, cereals, etc. Look for whole grain versions of these foods. The worst offenders seem to be sugar-sweetened beverages, candy, sweet additions to coffee and tea, sweet snacks, sugar-sweetened cereals, and desserts. Grams of added sugar are now a requirement on the food label and should be limited to less than 25 grams per day. Controlling blood sugar and improving insulin sensitivity is important to reduce heart disease risk (please download **Diabetes Basics** guide from this website homepage).

3. **Increase anti-inflammatory fat.** These are the fats that grow out of the ground, such as olive oil, nuts, nut butters, seeds, olives, avocados. Avocado oil and coconut oil tolerate cooking well. Olive oil is best consumed in salad dressing another form that will not be heated. Avoid inflammatory oils:



vegetable oil, soybean, canola, safflower, and corn.

4. Increase omega-3 fatty acids. The omega-3 fats DHA and EPA are fish oils that play many roles in the health of our eyes, brain, heart, and gut health in particular. The best sources are marine sources that are low in mercury, like wild & Alaskan salmon, herring, pacific oysters, trout, Atlantic and Pacific mackerel, krill, sardines, and algae. Higher mercury



fish to avoid are swordfish, shark, tilefish, and king mackerel. Caution with marlin, orange roughy, and tuna. It is recommended to eat at least 8 ounces of seafood per week. A fish oil supplement may also be used (EPA & DHA fats should be at least 250mg per day). Omega 3 Health (supplement) by Body Health is a good choice, as well as The Omega by Cymbiotika. Foods high in ALA omega-3s such as chia seeds, flax seeds, walnuts, avocado, and soybeans are very nutritious and beneficial.

5. Caution with saturated fat. This includes most fat from an animal, such as fatty meats, whole fat dairy, and real butter. Tropical oils are also highly saturated. Examples of highly saturated fatty meats are ribs, sausage, bacon, 70/30 ground beef, and tri tip. Healthier choices would be seafood, chicken, turkey, or pork loin. Again, eat certified organic whenever possible and look for grass fed beef. Recently there has been more research showing that saturated fat, especially full fat dairy, may not be as detrimental as once thought. Yogurt with live, active cultures contributes to healthy gut flora which reduces heart disease risk. Eating a variety of unsaturated fats in place of saturated fats and trans fats will reduce LDL cholesterol, blood pressure, and inflammation in the body. Eggs and other foods high in cholesterol, but low in saturated fat (like shrimp) are good choices. Organic whole soy (edamame, tempeh, soy nuts, some soy milks, tofu) are great options. Foods containing soy protein isolates however, may not be.

6. Limit sodium to less than 2,300 milligrams per day. Further reduction to 1,500 mg for people with hypertension, congestive heart failure, or chronic kidney disease may be recommended. The best way to cut down on sodium is to limit processed food. Sodium can contribute to heart disease even in people with low blood pressure. Foods high in sodium include canned foods (especially soups), frozen meals, marinated meats, cheese, seasonings, packaged convenience foods, chips, pretzels and crackers. Watch out for hidden sodium in dips, salad dressings, soy sauce, and other condiments. Look for low sodium versions of foods. Avoid using the salt shaker. Instead use fresh herbs, lemon, garlic, onion, pepper, Tabasco, or Mrs. Dash etc. Herbs and spices have many health benefits!

7. Exercise regularly. This is a VITAL component of weight management and limits risk for almost every disease. This will lower LDL (bad cholesterol) & increase HDL (good cholesterol). The most important factor regarding exercise is that it become a consistent habit. Eventually you should work up to 150 minutes per week. (Please download Exercise guide from this website homepage).



8. Maintain a healthy weight. Focus on long-term weight management by identifying & strategizing against your habits that are keeping weight on. (Please download Barriers to Weight Management guide from this website homepage).

9. Increase self-care & self-love. Our perceptions are our reality. Our minds must be in peace for our bodies to be in peace and vice-versa. (Please download Self-Care guide from this website).

10. Increase your fiber intake. High fiber foods include beans, nuts, nut butters, whole grains, fruits, and veggies. Foods that contain an amount of whole grain significant enough to contribute to our health may display a yellow postage stamp on their label and must have at least 8 grams of whole grain per serving.

Otherwise if a product just lists the words “whole grain”, it is meaningless. It is very important to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and veggies per day for the endless



benefits they provide, including potassium, which can mitigate sodium intake. Many high fiber foods are prebiotics and contribute to a healthy microbiome, which is continually being connected to more and more health benefits. (Please download Heal Your Gut guide from this website homepage) Aim for at least 48 grams of whole grain and 25 grams of fiber per day.

11. Reduce or eliminate alcohol intake. The Advisory Committee on USDA’s Dietary Guidelines has recommended adults of both genders limit alcohol to one drink per day on days when alcohol is consumed. Exceeding this increases risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, digestive problems, many cancers, anxiety, depression, cognitive issues, and more. One alcoholic beverage is 1-1.5oz hard alcohol, 4-5oz wine, or 12oz beer.

12. Caution with vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements. It is very important to educate yourself from credible sources on risks & benefits before taking any supplements. Refer to the resource page on www.nutritiontransformation.com for my recommended supplements

and sources of information. A general guideline is to take a multivitamin providing 50%-250% of the DV (daily value) for each nutrient. In other words, avoid megadosing that may occur if you take 10 times the recommended amount of a nutrient (or 1,000% DV for that nutrient) unless advised to do so by a medical professional. Many people don't get the vitamin D or magnesium in their diets that they need, so those would be important nutrients to supplement. For some, red yeast rice or niacin may be beneficial. Cho-Less by Natura is a good option in this case.

References:

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5. Harvard Medical School; The Truth about Fats: The Good, the Bad, the In-Between; 2019.
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