

Heart Healthy Eating



What you eat really does matter. There are many ways to enjoy a heart healthy dietary pattern using foods and recipes from a variety of traditional and cultural eating styles.

The Heart Foundation's nine steps to eating for a healthy heart are:

1. Enjoy three meals a day, selecting from dishes that encourage you to eat plant foods and fish, with little or no dairy fat, meat fat or deep fried foods
2. Choose fruits and/or vegetables at every meal and for most snacks
3. Select whole grains, whole grain breads, or high-fibre breakfast cereals, in place of white bread and low-fibre varieties at most meals and snacks
4. Include fish or dried peas (e.g. chickpeas), beans (e.g. red kidney beans) and soy products or a small serving of lean meat or skinned poultry, at one or two meals each day
5. Choose low-fat milk, low-fat milk products, soy or legume products every day
6. Use small amounts of oil, margarine, nuts or seeds
7. Drink plenty of fluids each day, particularly water, and limit sugar-sweetened drinks and alcohol
8. Use only small amounts of total fats and oils, sugar and salt when cooking and preparing meals, snacks or drinks. Choose ready-prepared foods low in these ingredients
9. Mostly avoid, butter, deep-fried and fatty foods and only occasionally choose sweet bakery products.

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The following tables help to describe the quality and quantity of food needed to support a heart healthy eating pattern. By choosing mostly foods from the 'heart healthy food' groups and limiting 'other foods' you can lower your individual risk of cardiovascular disease.

Heart Healthy Foods

HEART HEALTHY FOOD GROUPS	DAILY SERVINGS	HOW MUCH IS A SERVING?
Fruits and coloured vegetables	Aim to eat at least 8 servings daily	1 piece of fruit, ½ cup canned fruit in natural fruit juice, 1 cup raw leafy or salad vegetables, ½ cup cooked vegetables, 1 tomato or 1 carrot
Grains and starchy vegetables <i>Choose a variety of grain products (at least half of these should be whole grain products).</i>	Aim to eat at least 6 or more grains and starchy vegetables	1 medium slice bread, ½ cup pasta or porridge, ⅔ cup whole wheat cereal, 1 small potato, ½ kumara, 3 whole grain crispbreads
Fish* and seafood, dried peas and beans, lean meat and skinned poultry	Eat between 1-3 depending on kilojoule requirements	½ cup tuna, 2 small or 1 large fillet of cooked fish, ½ cup lean mince or casserole, 1 cup cooked dried beans
Milk and milk products <i>Use soy substitutes if preferred</i>	Eat 2-3 depending on kilojoule requirements	1 cup trim or very low-fat milk, ⅓ cup cottage cheese, 1 pottle low-fat yoghurt, 3 tbsp grated cheddar cheese
Oils, spreads, nuts, seeds and avocado <i>Choose products made from sunflower, soy bean, olive, canola, linseed, safflower, or nuts and seeds other than coconut</i>	Eat 3 or more depending on kilojoule requirements	1 tsp soft table margarine or oil, 2 tsp light margarine, 1 dessert spoon nuts, 1 tbsp avocado, 1 tbsp sunflower or sesame seeds
Non-alcoholic drinks	Between 6-8 non-alcoholic drinks	1 glass water, 1 cup tea, coffee or 'diet' soft drink

* If you do not eat oily fish, include fish oil capsules, linseeds, walnuts, wheatgerm, linseed or canola oil for heart healthy omega-3 fats.

A 'kilojoule' is a measure of the energy value within a food or drink. Aim for fewer kilojoules if over weight or inactive.

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Limit your intake of these foods:

Other Foods

OTHER FOODS	DAILY LIMITS	HOW MUCH IS A SERVING?
Alcoholic drinks	Up to 2 drinks for women and 3 drinks for men	1 can/stubbie of beer, 100 ml wine or 2 nips of spirit, use 'diet' drinks as mixers
Savoury snack foods	Up to 2 for low [#] kilojoule needs and 4 for high kilojoule needs	3 reduced-fat crackers, 15 rice crackers, 30 grams rice snacks or low saturated fat crisps*
High sugar foods	Up to 2 for low [#] kilojoule needs and 4 for high kilojoule needs	1 tbsp jam or honey, 3 small low fat biscuits, ½ small muffin, ½ cup light frozen dessert or frozen yoghurt
High saturated fat	Up to 2 for low kilojoule needs and up to 4 for high kilojoule needs per week	2 small chocolate or cream biscuits, 100 grams ice-cream, 1 medium fries or instant noodles, 50 grams chocolate or crisps

* Low saturated crisps generally have less than 4 grams per 100 grams.

Low kilojoule needs are for people with Type 2 diabetes who are overweight, others who need to lose weight and people who are physically inactive.

If you do eat eggs, limit to 3 eggs per week.

Including carbohydrates in the heart healthy eating pattern

The eating pattern recommends you eat healthy sources of food containing carbohydrates to help lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. The Glycemic Index (GI) measures the effect of foods on your blood sugar levels. If you eat foods with a high GI value then your blood sugar levels will rise more quickly than if you eat foods with a low GI.

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Choose from servings that are **low or moderate in GI and high in fibre**. Try to have at least one low GI high fibre serving at each meal. The following tables offer some suggestions.

High Fibre Choices

LOW GI	MODERATE GI	HIGH GI
All-Bran™, oat porridge, natural muesli, oat bran, rice bran, pearly barley and bulghur (cracked) wheat	Oat bran, Weet-Bix™, instant porridge, Vita-Brits™, Just Right™, Fruitful Lite™ and Mini Wheats™ Wholewheat	Lite-bix™, Mini Wheats™ Blackcurrant, Sultana Bran™ and puffed wheat
Breads with high content of whole grain, seeds and at least 5 grams fibre per 100 grams	Vita-wheat™ Crispbread, other wholemeal bread	Ryvita™ crispbread Molenburg™ bread, other grain breads with high white flour content
Apples, pears, oranges, grapefruit, berry and stone fruits, kiwi, mango, prunes, dried apricots and under-ripe banana (yellow skin)	Melons, pineapple, raisins, sultanas and very ripe bananas	Dates
Baked beans, other dried peas/beans, sweetcorn, yams, and peas	Small canned potatoes, taro	Most potatoes, parsnip, kumara, broad beans, mashed potato

Low Fibre Choices

LOW GI	MODERATE GI	HIGH GI
Special K™, Frosties™, fruit breads, fruit and vegetable juices, Snack Right Fruit Slice™	Nutrigrain™, pita bread, hamburger bun	Cornflakes™, Rice Bubbles™, White bread, Fibre White™, bagels, wheatmeal bread, baguette, white buns
White wheat pasta, sushi, koshikari short grain rice, some varieties long grain rice	Basmati/doongara rice, most long grain rice, udon noodles, rice pasta/noodles, couscous, rice pudding and plain popcorn	Corn thins, rice cakes, ricecrackers, jasmine calrose rice, long cooked white rice, sticky/glutinous rice

A *Guide to Heart Healthy Eating* booklet from the Heart Foundation has more in depth information on eating and nutrition.