

# NUTRITION AND EXERCISE: HEALTHY BALANCE FOR A HEALTHY HEART

The food a person eats can affect the way blood flows through the heart and arteries. A diet high in saturated fat and cholesterol can gradually cause a buildup in the arteries. That buildup slows down the blood flow and blocks small arteries. If the blockage happens in an artery that carries blood to the heart muscle, the heart muscle can die. That is a heart attack. If the blockage happens in an artery that carries blood to the brain, part of the brain can die. That is a stroke. The right diet helps keep the arteries clear and reduces the risk of heart problems and stroke. Keeping your heart healthy by watching what you eat is not as hard as it sounds.

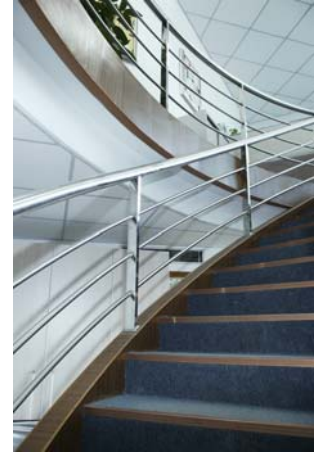
## Tips for a heart-healthy diet:

- Eat less saturated fat (especially butter, coconut and palm oil, fats such as Crisco, animal fats in meats, fats in dairy products).
- Use nonstick vegetable oil cooking sprays instead of margarine.
- Buy lean cuts of meat; reduce portion size to 3 ounces (the size of a pack of cards).
- Eat more fish, skinless chicken and turkey.
- Try low-fat snacks that have been baked instead of fried, such as pretzels.
- Drink skim milk, and buy low-fat cheese, yogurt and margarine.
- Buy sherbet, ice milk or frozen low-fat yogurt instead of ice cream.
- Have a bagel or English muffin instead of a donut or pastry.
- Eat no more than 4 egg yolks a week (use egg whites or egg substitutes).
- Bake, broil, steam or grill foods instead of frying them.
- Eat fewer “fast foods” (burgers, fried foods), which are high in fat.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Drink low-calorie beverages, such as unsweetened tea or diet soda pop.



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Exercise makes the heart stronger, helping it pump more blood with each heartbeat. The blood then delivers more oxygen to the body, which helps it function more efficiently. Exercise can also lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and reduce levels of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, which clogs the arteries and can cause a heart attack.



Try to exercise about 30 minutes nearly everyday. Your health care provider may make a different recommendation based on your health. There are lots of ways to raise heart rate during the regular day:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk during coffee break or lunch.
- Walk to work or park at the end of the parking lot so you have to walk further.
- Walk more briskly.
- Do housework at a quicker pace and more often.
- Do yard work, such as raking leaves or pushing the lawn mower.

